

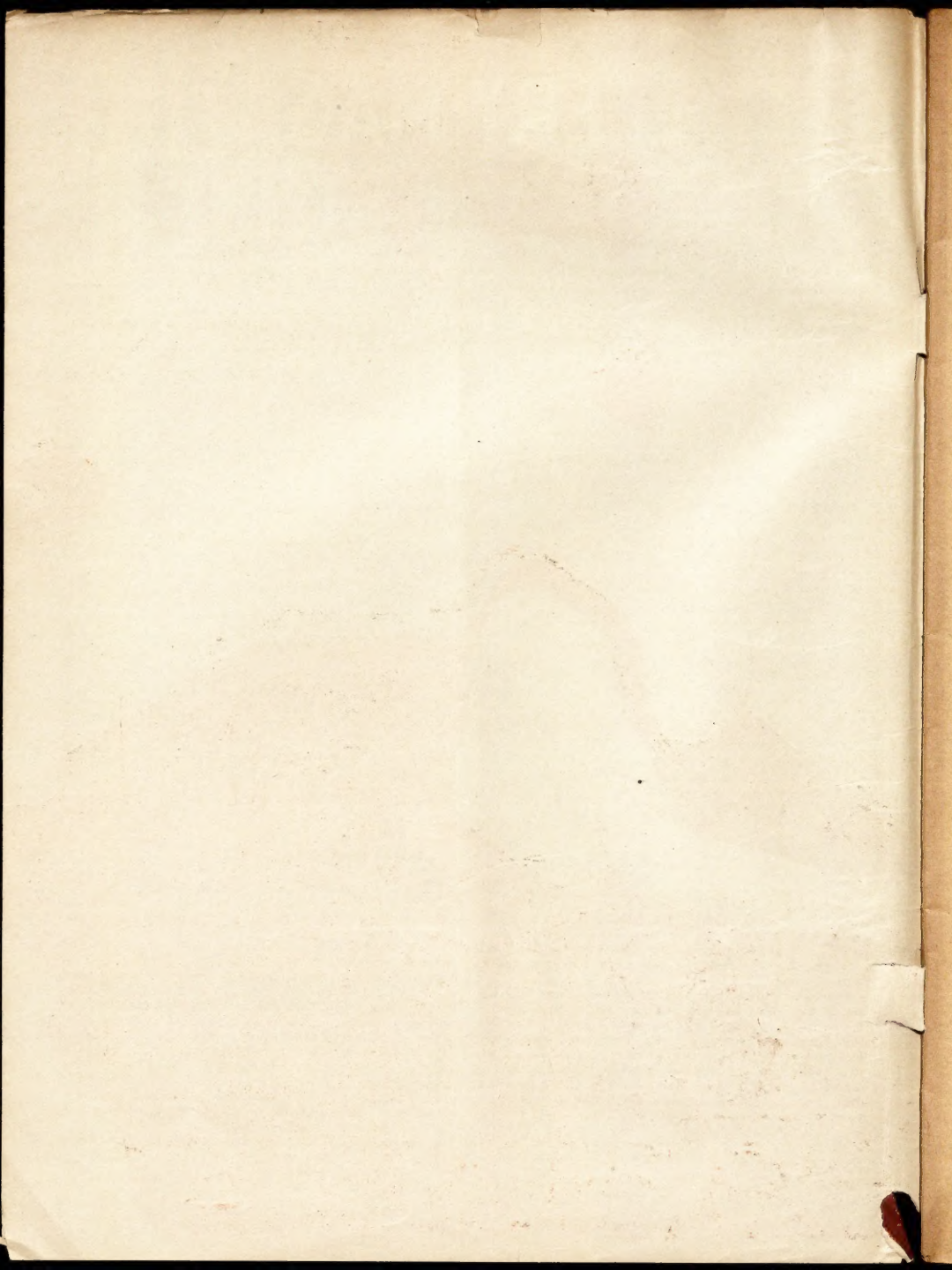
MYSTERY MAGAZINE

The cover features a woman in a red dress in the foreground, looking down. In the background, a man's face is visible. There are red, blotchy shapes on the cover, possibly representing blood or ink.

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The
SECRET of
the
SEALED BOOK
A MYSTERY
STORY
BY
ETHEL ROSEMON



"THE CLUE OF STEEL," by Willis Lathrop, Out In Our Next Number!

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MARCH 1, 1920.

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THE SECRET OF THE SEALED BOOK

A MYSTERY STORY

By ETHEL ROSEMON

CHAPTER ONE

"I CAN'T get over the feeling that it isn't good sportsmanship to break the seal on a book and read a woman's diary."

Detective Mills leaned back in the easy-chair that was one of the features of his bachelor's library and regarded me earnestly through rings of smoke. He was like that, this "gentleman detective." His keen mind was always leading him into byways over which his conscience—or was it his Virginia ancestry?—had hung the sign "Private Grounds." He had a particular aversion to any case that opened the book of a woman's life to the unsympathetic gaze of a sensation-loving public. Yet he loved mystery and, as he often remarked:

"In running any crime to earth you must step on the soul

of some woman—innocent or guilty—before you reach your goal."

I met the detective ten years ago when I came from the West to write for a New York daily. One of my first assignments was a case in which he was particularly interested, as it involved the reputation of a prominent Richmond woman. New York's ideas and ideals were somewhat foreign to both of us, and in this we found a common bond which increased steadily from a mere business acquaintance to one of those firm friendships which with men stand the life test of silence and separation. Now that I have forsaken reporting for the free-lance fiction field, he has formed the habit of calling me in on cases in the hope that I may some day run across an idea that will develop into the master mystery story of the ages.

I happened to be chatting with him in his library the

afternoon headquarters called up with the news that the body of a woman had been found in the cellar of the old Sextus House. Other members of the staff had already been officially assigned to the case, but the chief thought Mills might want to nose around on his own account.

"I'd rather stay out of that sort of thing, you know," he remarked as he hung up the receiver.

"Well, let's go over there, anyway," I urged. "Things are dull now, and who knows but what the big idea may be lurking in the cellar of that old hotel?"

He yielded and on the way over we discussed the history of the place. In the early days it had been one of those moderate-priced hotels that had gone along quietly and steadily without the aid of publicity. Then, as the better class of business began to push its way uptown, it ran through the various stages from a cheap salesman's resort to an ordinary lodging house where the city's down-and-outs could get a bed for twenty-five cents. The property had recently been purchased by a business corporation for a large office building. I remembered reading only a few nights before that the occupants of a store near by had complained to the Board of Health of the odors from the old hotel's cellar, which for the past few years had been made the depository for ashes and refuse by the keepers of the dingy little shops that occupied the ground floor of the building.

"Evidently the department has set to work," I remarked to Mills.

Sure enough, when we arrived at the building we found a Street Cleaning Department wagon drawn up before the door. Policemen guarded the entrance and held back the crowd that had gathered with the hope of being eye-witnesses to the final act of some gruesome tragedy. The detective showed his badge and we made our way through gossiping groups down rickety steps that led to the cellar. Flashlights illumined our way as we stumbled over ashes and debris, and then, as the man in charge recognized my companion he nodded, in greeting. A group of Italian workmen stood at one side of a cleared space, talking excitedly. On the other side a man from headquarters was asking questions to which every one was answering at once, each of the workmen endeavoring to take to himself the doubtful credit of having first hit the woman's body they found with his shovel.

It lay there on the damp, filthy floor of the cellar, refuse piled high around it. Ashes clung to the dress, which was made of some heavy winter material. Over her head was tied a man's knit undershirt, now the color of the dirt around it. Rats had gnawed into this, and as the man in charge removed it, the girl's hair, long and dark, came with it. A shudder ran through the men at the sight of the uncovered skull, and the laborers hurried in a huddled group toward the stairs.

"We won't get any further by staying here," the officer suggested, and leaving two of his aides in charge, he led the way around the cellar in a tour of investigation.

Curiously enough, the rapping of his stick on the ceiling above revealed trap doors from the shops located on that side of the building.

"It might be well to question the shopkeepers at once," said the officer, starting up the stairs.

Mills and I brought up the rear of the procession. He was a foot or so in back of me, and when a sound as if of ripping canvas caused me to look around, I saw him in the act of straightening himself from a stooping position and slipping a small sealed book in his pocket. When he reached the main floor he seemed in a great hurry to leave, so, as without the detective I had no further excuse for lingering, I accompanied him as far as the Subway, where we parted.

I had a curious interest in the body found in the cellar of the old Sextus House, and eagerly scanned the papers for every new development in the case. As is usual in such instances, the body was identified by some one as that of a certain woman who had disappeared in the past five years. One by one the various theories were exploded, not, however, until they had given the newspapers an opportunity to review all the most entertaining scandals on its files.

Meanwhile the police and detectives worked on the case undaunted by the ambitious efforts of cub reporters. By searching the company's renting books they discovered that before the present occupant, a bill poster, the shop directly below which the body had been found had been used as a combined engraving plant and living quarters by a Louis West. West had moved in the first of August of the previous year and had disappeared in March, leaving all his belongings and the rent of the shop paid until the next May. Thrown under suspicion by his sudden disappearance, he was hunted, and finally discovered in a Philadelphia prison, where he was serving a term for the attempted murder of his wife, a little black-eyed Irish girl, two weeks after his disappearance from his shop in the Sextus House.

It was to discuss this latest denouement with my friend Mills that I had dropped in at his rooms the evening he expressed his scruples about reading a woman's sealed diary. On the table before him lay an old book, yellow and dirty, its pages covered with small writing. It had been bound with a piece of tape and the ends were secured with sealing wax, into which a dainty seal had been pressed.

"And the diary?" I reminded him, as he seemed lost in thoughts of his own.

"Yes, this is it," he admitted. It was sealed, but I broke the seal. "You heard me rip the side of an old canvas satchel over which I stumbled accidentally that day in the Sextus House cellar? You saw me take this sealed book from it. I knew you saw me, and I knew also you were the only one who did. It was that bag marked D. F. in which the detectives could find no clue to the identity of the owner. They are now searching the list of West's acquaintances to see if there ever was one with those initials. You know some one has reported that a woman about the size of the one discovered in the cellar was in the habit of visiting him at night, but never in the daytime. Of course, now that he is under suspicion, some one would naturally remember a woman of that size as being a constant visitor. I have reported the substance of this paper to my chief, and am holding it until further developments. It is so interesting a document as a revelation of human nature—or rather woman nature—that I am going to run over it again. Would you like to hear it, for in spite of any scruples I may have about reading other people's diaries, the general public will find no obstacle in the way of enjoying every word of it when—if it has any bearing on the case in question—it is run serially in the newspapers with illustrations by some prominent moving picture star?"

I expressed my desire to be present at the private reading of the diary, and Mills, after placing between us two glasses and a precious bottle from a stock he had laid in during the ante-prohibition days, settled down in his chair and began to read.

CHAPTER TWO

"**W**HAT instinct is it that leads us to write down, so even a chance person may read, secrets that we would hide even from ourselves? Why do we entrust to the pages of a little book hours of bitter suffering which

we would give years of life to forget, so that should time erase them from our memories, we may suffer them anew in reading the record we have made? Yet every great woman has left behind her a personal account of her joys and her sorrows, and in every case the greatness has been in direct ratio to her capacity to enjoy, to suffer. Some day I am going to be famous. I will not have it otherwise. Between this day and that there will be many pages intended for no eye but mine. Nevertheless, I will record everything truthfully, faithfully. When life wanes into the years of calmness I shall measure its value by my ability to relieve through these pages its tense moments.

"Last night was one of those moments. When I stepped out on that stage and saw that vast sea of faces swimming before me, my heart ached with the fullness of its joy. I was born for the stage. My father's mother had been in the ballet, her mother before her, and he married my mother from the ballet. He brought me to New York when I was four years old, right after the death of my mother, and before I was six he had me in training for the ballet. From his position as first trombone player he could watch my progress. It is through his influence, combined with my diligence and early training, that at sixteen I have my opportunity as second danseuse in 'The Red Phantom,' one of New York's most spectacular productions.

"How I trembled as I waited in the wings for my turn to go on; how I watched the premier danseuse as she glided gracefully from one side of the stage to the other or floated to the footlights upon the tips of her toes. I listened to the applause. How would they greet me after they paid homage to her, their favorite danseuse and New York's reigning beauty? Could I hope to please even with my best work? Surely my limbs would fail me from fright. Then I remembered that John Martin had often told me that I was more beautiful than she. John is the stage carpenter, with a heart as big as that vast theater. We are engaged, but John will not hear of our marrying yet.

"Time enough when you are eighteen," he says. "Then I shall have laid by a dollar or two to make a home for ourselves, and a place by the fireside for your old father, too."

"I knew that John could see me, away up there in the flies, and I knew, too, that from down there in the orchestra my father could watch my every move, as he pushed and pulled at the valve of his great trombone. How could I fail with those two loving hearts praying for my success? Now, I could dance, and I would dance for them alone, not for the applause of the gayly attired throng who has one favorite to-night, a new one before the next sun has set.

"I watched the bailiff who was the center of a vast ring of fairies and villagers on the other side of the stage. The lowering of his staff was my cue to go on. It came, and I glided out into that great space. There was no applause at my entrance. The audience did not know me and it was determined to make me earn every breath of approval. I fixed my eyes upon the shining brass of my father's old trombone, that projected above the glare of the footlights.

"Dear old horn," I murmured, "I'll dance to you alone."

"One, two, three; one, two, three." The first motif was a slow one. Then came the tiptoe movement in which I had to repeat the whole previous figure with lightning speed, whirling here and there upon the tips of my toes. The orchestra seemed carried away with the spirit of the dance. Fiddles rang, flageolets tooted, cornets shrieked and flutes breathed forth soft notes, while the double bass groaned and mumbled like a grouchy old man scolding himself and the world. Dance? I did not dance. I flew from one side

of the stage to the other in one giddy, dizzy, bewildering whirl. And as for all those clashing, twanging instruments, they might as well have been silent, for I danced to the music of one alone, to the blare and blast of the first trombone.

"Bravo! Bravo! Florenz! Florenz!" came from all parts of that huge house. Men and women rose to their feet and waved and threw flowers until the stage around me was a mass of brilliant blossoms. Again and again I returned to the footlights and bowed my thanks. It was impossible for me to go through that number again, and finally those upon the stage shouted their lines above the noise, and the clapping and stamping came to a reluctant end.

"I made my way blindly to my dressing room, my heart in a tumult of joyous excitement. As I laid my hand on the knob, to push the door open, a light hand touched my shoulder, and a voice whispered in my ear:

"Beauty, your dancing was divine."

"I turned and looked into the eyes of a man, clean-cut of a peculiar baffling distinction, a man in his late thirties who still retained all the buoyancy, all the eager vigor of early youth. He smiled down upon me, revealing teeth of singular whiteness and regularity, and I thought his was the handsomest face I had ever seen. I stood fascinated, gazing into blue eyes that seemed to pierce my very soul. Then a realization of his boldness in speaking flashed upon me and I drew back.

"How dare you address me?" I asked.

"At this his expression changed entirely. His smile vanished and his almost lipless mouth became one thin straight line across his face. I shuddered at the change, and even as I did his face lighted again with that wonderful warmth. Again I stood fascinated, looking into his eyes, listening to the soft tones of his voice. I forgot the stage, the world, until the door beside me opened and my dresser warned me that I had barely time to get ready for the next act. As I stepped across the threshold of my dressing room the stranger pressed into my hand a single flower, a deep red rose. All during my change the dresser kept up a monologue about the folly of young girls being carried away by the attentions of strange men. Her voice came to me as from a great distance, for the singing in my ears kept out every other sound. She sighed and shook her head as just before I ran out to the wings I pulled the white rose, John M.'s gift, from my hair and put in its place the deep red flower.

During the next two acts I danced as if I were alone in a great forest, alone but for the laughing blue eyes that smiled down upon me from each tree. I forgot my father pushing and pulling at his great trombone, I forgot John looking down upon me from the flies, I forgot every one but the strange man whose flower swayed back and forth in my hair as I whirled across the stage.

"Late that night there was a supper at our little apartment in celebration of my success. My father, my ballet-master and John were there. Each tried to outdo the other in his praise of my evening's performance, but I heard scarcely a word, for singing in my heart was one refrain:

"Beauty, your dancing was divine."

"Our guests soon noticed my silence. They had expected me to be bubbling over with joyous excitement, as I was the day father brought home the news that I was to have my chance.

"Our little girl is tired out," said the ballet master sympathetically, and no wonder, after the nervous excitement of her first night."

"Tired out? Why, I could have danced the remainder

of life if I knew one face, one face with its wonderful smile, its baffling eyes, was in the audience.

"Now they have gone, and I am alone with you, my diary, you and my thoughts. What a peculiar fascination this stranger has for me. I know it cannot be love—I am not one to give my heart away so easily—and yet his face is ever before me. He smiles at me from every page I write, and sometimes I see him with his mouth drawn in one thin line. I shudder—then that picture of him disappears and he is again smiling at me. I am not sleepy, but I will crawl into bed. With the darkness all around perhaps I shall see him more clearly.

CHAPTER THREE

"IT is seven long weeks since I have touched these pages—seven weeks of feverish happiness—seven weeks in which I have grown from girlhood to womanhood—seven weeks in which I have nightly listened to the thunderous applause of vast audiences, have received their admiring notes, their flowers, their invitations, and have tossed them all carelessly aside. Seven weeks in which there has been but one face, one voice. I have quarreled with John and broken our engagement. Two nights after our opening I accepted the escort of Morgan Dean from the theater to our home. That led to a scene with John and we are now almost strangers. My father looks gray at the new order of things, but says nothing. All he desires is his child's happiness, and yet I can tell from his silence that he fears for my future.

"Morgan is an engraver by trade. He specializes in theatrical work, and has a large acquaintance in the profession. That is how he gained admittance behind the scenes the night of our opening. He has been there every night since, always waiting at the door of my dressing room after each act, to whisper words of encouragement and praise. He says he is unhappy when he is not with me, yet he has never even hinted of marriage. Perhaps that will come later. Like John he, too, considers me too young to think of settling down.

"My success steadily increased from the opening night, much to the displeasure of the premier danseuse. She saw her public slipping away from her, dividing its allegiance with another dancer. She ordered the management to put me back in the chorus. When she was informed that I had become quite as great an asset as she, that to withdraw me from the cast would mean a falling off of the box office receipts, she retired in disgust, and I became premiere danseuse. My father's joy at my promotion knew no bounds.

"You will be the greatest dancer in the world," he said as he held me to him. "If your dear mother could only share our happiness!"

"But to me this fulfillment of my childhood dream, years before I had even dared hope for its realization, paled before the thought that after the first act Morgan would be waiting for me at the door of my dressing room. 'Would he care? Would he be proud of me?' that was my only thought. His eyes were beaming with pleasure, his voice thrilled me with its new note of tenderness as he whispered:

"It has come sooner than we hoped, hasn't it, little one?"

"When he took me home that night he expressed the fear that all these honors, the new friends that my higher position would bring, would take me away from him.

"Never while you want me," I answered, and as he gazed deep into my eyes, he knew I spoke the truth.

"Even then he did not mention marriage, nor did he say openly that he loved me. But I knew he did. The eagerness with which he waited my coming each night, the light in his eyes when they met mine, the caress in his voice when he addressed me, these told me that his heart was mine. What need had I of words?"

"But even my success, the highest position in my profession, does not satisfy Morgan.

"Your dancing is divine, little girl," he tells me repeatedly, 'but it is not the highest form of expressing your art. You were destined for the operatic stage. You will become both wealthy and famous as a singer. That will be your world.'

"An opera singer? Such a thought had never entered my mind, nor had my father ever dreamed of that future for me. During my long course of training my voice has been carefully cultivated, not that my father ever thought I would make an ordinary professional singer, much less a prima donna, but simply that, to his mind, music is a part of one's general education. Here is a new field opened up for me. I have every confidence in Morgan's judgment. If he thinks I am destined to be a great opera singer, I will be.

"When 'The Red Phantom' neared its close, my father began to discuss my next engagement.

"I know of no other production this season that will require a premier danseuse," he said. "What will my little girl do now?"

"I will study for opera," I announced.

"Opera?" he repeated in astonishment. "Why, what put that idea into your head?"

"For some reason I did not tell him that it was Morgan. He tried to talk me out of it, but when he saw that I was determined to give up the place I had so early won, to attempt to gain another in a line for which he considered me thoroughly unsuited, he ceased to oppose me. On the contrary, like the loving parent he has always been, he is now putting forth every effort to help me in my new career.

"The Red Phantom" closed to-night. For two whole weeks I am going to rest, and then I will begin those wonderful studies with a noted impresario, who, through Morgan's influence, has consented to take me as a pupil. The future stretches ahead, a long, long road, with a cloud of dull gray mist at the end. I have tried in vain to break through it, to see what it hides from my gaze. It stands there a gray, gray wall, and I am afraid. If only Morgan would hold out his arms to me, would invite me to share his lot, no matter what it might be, I would gladly give up all these dreams of fame and fortune. My happiness is not in the love, the praise of the world, but in the heart of one man. I know now that all my studying, all my work, will be with one thought in mind, that my success will endear me still further to him who has become my very life.

CHAPTER FOUR

"I FOUND you to-day, my diary, in the bottom of an old trunk, found you after two years. As I read your pages, it seems as if some other girl wrote them, some other self, who stands aloof, and looks down with pitying eyes upon the self she sees to-day. That other self must have lived in another world, a world in which there was hope, and love, and God; a world in which trees were green, a world in which spring came every year, and brought with it a promise of new life. That other self danced because she could not help it, because there was joy

in her heart. She loved life, not for what it gave, but for what it made her feel, for her ability to reach out and clasp the future to her breast. But you know this other self. She was your friend. It is the new self that is a stranger to you, whose thoughts and feelings you must come, step by step, to know.

"I have not danced since the night that other self wrote her final words on your pages. I was to be an opera singer, not a dancer, and to that end I bent every effort, spent every waking moment. I sacrificed not only myself, but my dear father. Still, during those two years of study, he uttered no word of complaint. Instead of my earning a living and contributing to our mutual fund, I was a constant expense to him with my singing lessons, my Italian lessons, and all the side issues that pertain to the making of an opera singer. And yet he never mentioned the added strain, only grew a little grayer about the temples, and blew harder than ever upon his old trombone.

"Finally those days of study came to an end. Morgan and the impresario decided that I was ready to appear before the most critical audience the Metropolis could gather, and I was billed for my opening night. The opera? Why mention its name? It is sufficient to note that it was a part made famous by the foremost singer of the day. Had the choice been left to me, I would have selected something else, some rôle that invited no such comparison, but both Morgan and the impresario considered it exactly suited to my voice and type, and I had come to yield unquestioningly to their judgment.

"Morgan called for me at seven o'clock. While I was dressing I ran to the window, thinking I heard a taxi stop at our door, and I saw that it had begun to snow. It fell faster and faster, until it came down in a perfect sheet, a white, whirling, driving mass, that turned into mounds of a pasty consistency as it fell, too firm to melt, too soft to pack down hard. The faster it fell, the smaller my chances of success became. Who would venture out on a night like this to hear a new opera singer, whose name was not even known?

"During the ride from my home to the theater, my spirits sank lower and lower, and even Morgan's tender words of encouragement failed to bring their usual response. I found my dressing room cold and cheerless. Morgan's huge bunch of deep red roses was the only bright spot in the grayness, and somehow the flowers appeared too vivid, too boldly hopeful.

"The curtain rose on a handful of people who seemed irritated at being away from their warm homes on a night like this. Their whole attitude said that an event so poorly attended could not possibly be worth the sacrifice they had made. When my entrance cue came, and I walked to the footlights, my heart seemed like a stone within my breast. How could I sing with such a load choking my voice? Mechanically I turned my gaze towards the orchestra, looking for something I knew I would not see, the shining brass of the dear old instrument that had sustained me so nobly upon my opening night two long years back. As I looked, my ears vainly sought to catch the well-known blast and blare of my dear father's first trombone. I knew it would not be there, and yet I sought for some sign, some miracle.

"I am sorry not to be present on your opening night, little one," he had said as he left the house, "but the rent is behind—it costs so much to live in these profiteering times—and I cannot afford to be away for even one night. God knows I wish you success, and when it comes, then your old father will be able to sit back and listen to you in comfort."

"He had kissed my forehead, and as he did so I felt a tear on my face. So that dear familiar instrument was being played in another theater for other ears than mine,

and yet I knew that through the player its soul was going out to me at that moment. Could it have known the anguish of my heart it would have sent forth its notes above the other instruments of the orchestra in one long groaning wail of despair.

"The whole miserable farce was a failure from the very beginning. The orchestra was abominable, the tenor poor, and the baritone, who might have made some impression, was too intoxicated to do justice to himself or to the opera. As for myself, the first few moments on that stage demonstrated beyond any shadow of a doubt that I would never make a figure in Italian opera. If the impresario had not been desperately in love with me himself, he would have known from the beginning that beauty of face and form could in no measure make up for the lack of voice. Failure, miserable failure! The pain it gives me to pen these words is so intense that it is almost a pleasure. I feel like shouting them from the house-tops to punish myself for the blind folly of two years. I, who might to-day be the most successful dancer of my time, am now a public failure.

"Morgan was waiting for me in the wings as the curtain descended upon the last act, descended without even a faint ripple of applause for the vain effort I had put forth. If the public could but look into our hearts, could know one hundredth part of the agony we suffer, it would be kind, or at least charitable. Morgan seemed sincerely sorry and yet as he led me with bowed head toward the door of my dressing room, I was conscious of something in his manner which I could not understand. I looked up suddenly and surprised in his eyes a peculiar look of triumph which changed instantly into one of sympathetic understanding.

"Never mind, Dolores," he whispered, "I see I have led you along the wrong path, but we still have each other, so what else matters?"

"Slightly comforted by his words, I hastened to change to my street clothes and soon joined him again at the stage entrance.

"Take me home, take me home," I begged, as I saw the stage hands gazing at me with pity, "I can't stand it."

"Yes, dear, right away," he assured me, as he wrapped my cloak more closely about my figure and assisted me into the waiting cab.

"We drove on through the snow, Morgan with his arm about me, I with my head buried against his shoulder. The traffic was heavy at that time of the night, and in that part of the town. Every few moments our car was stopped. I knew that the waiting crowds standing at the curbs were looking curiously in at me. I could almost feel their gaze through the thickness of the fur collar which I had pulled about my face, but it made little difference. The eyes that had gazed up at me from the theater that night, eyes in which there was no gleam of sympathy, or understanding, were the only ones that counted now.

"The car drove on for a few blocks without interruption, and then suddenly it came to a standstill again. The chauffeur jumped down from his seat and flung the door open.

"Here we are," Morgan exclaimed.

"But this is not home," I cried in amazement, as I saw that we had stopped before the entrance of a well-known hotel, and two men in livery were waiting to help us out.

CHAPTER FIVE.

"INSTINCT warned me to remain in that cab, to order the chauffeur to drive me to my own home, but I had suffered so deeply that night, had been so cruelly torn by emotions, that I had not the will or the desire to heed the

warning. Morgan's eyes were fastened on mine with that fixed expression he had used so frequently of late, and I followed him to the curb, almost without willing to do so. In another instant I was standing in the shelter of the hotel door and the taxi cab was crunching the snow beneath its skid chains as it turned down the street.

"It is just a little supper I planned for you, in celebration of your success," Morgan explained. "The guests were already invited, so you must be brave, and face them with a smile on your lips. It will not do to admit your failure."

"Almost in a dream I felt the maid removing my wraps in the dressing room, and then, still numb to all feeling, I moved to the door where Morgan was waiting for me. He drew my arm through his, and led me into a private dining-room, brilliantly lighted, and laden with the scent of many perfumes. As we appeared in the doorway, the high-pitched voices were silenced for a moment, and then they broke out again in noisy congratulations, none of which had the note of sincerity. Though most of the guests had not thought it worth while to attend the performance, news of my failure had surely reached them. I recognized the women at once as belonging to a class whose day is not a success unless it ends with a midnight frolic of one sort or another, the men as the fringe of professional life, who are ever ready to furnish this frolic upon the slightest provocation. I knew not one of them cared whether I put in appearance or not. The wine would have flowed just as freely. Indeed I was but a necessary interruption in the night's gayety.

"It's all right," Morgan whispered, as I gazed up at him questioningly. "All professionals have these little parties. Enter into the spirit of it and forget your trouble for a while."

Whether it was his words, the heat of the room or the general spirit of recklessness that pervaded the gathering, I do not know; but I soon found myself at the head of the table, presiding with a gay abandon of which I had never dreamed myself capable. Even Morgan looked at me in amazement, as time after time I raised my glass, and attempted to sing the songs which had composed my evening's miserable failure. Once or twice he even attempted to restrain my hilarity by a firm grasp of my arm, but I had passed all bounds. Unaccustomed as I was to drinking, the first glass of champagne had gone to my head, and I continued to drink it as freely as if it had been water.

"The next thing I knew I came to myself in a hotel room, with a colored maid watching at my bedside. My head throbbled so it was an effort for me to raise it from the pillow. I tried to speak, to question this silent attendant, but no sound came from my parched throat. Quietly she left my bedside, and returned shortly with a cooling drink which she held to my lips.

"As soon as I was able to think, the whole wretched affair came back to me in all its dreadful vividness, my failure in the opera, the noisy party at the hotel, my own hilarity, a dark, dark interval, and then this awful awakening.

"What day is it?" I asked feebly.

"Wednesday," the maid answered, and volunteered no further information, nor did I desire any. That was sufficient. I had been away from home two nights. I had no wish to return, to face those dear eyes in which all trust must have died. I would continue in the way I had begun. If drink made one forget, I would court that forgetfulness.

"Toward evening Morgan came into the room." He looked sterner, older, the thin line across his face was more vividly drawn. He sat by my bedside, silently looking down at me with a speculative gaze. Finally he spoke,

quietly yet with the hidden force that had always led me to do his bidding. He pointed out that I could not return home, that I was forever cut off from my father, from all my old associates. Even if this unfortunate accident, as he termed it, had not occurred, I would have found it difficult to obtain an engagement here. As a singer I had made a miserable failure. I was too long out of practice to hope to return to the stage as a dancer.

"Why not leave this country, and come with me to England," he urged. "There your beauty will make you a favorite in the music halls, and you have enough voice to hold your place. We can start life anew, and you will be able to make a comfortable living for both of us."

"I was too discouraged, too broken-hearted to argue. It may have been from force of habit, but I still clung to him as unquestioningly as I had from the night he first met me at the door of my dressing room. I had cast my lot with his, and there was no turning back. He had not suggested marriage, and in the light of what had happened, it seemed of minor importance. He mentioned that we would be known as Mr. and Mrs. Waterson, and aside from making a mental note of my new name, I showed no interest.

"We were soon on the ocean bound for that land through which, after my first success, I often dreamed of making a triumphant tour. That it offer me a shelter, that it help me forget that I ever knew, ever loved another country, is all I ask of it now. I left with no word of farewell to that dear father. What could I say that would make his burden any the lighter to bear? Perhaps later some kind Destiny will show me how to make amends. Perhaps Morgan will suggest our marriage as soon as we reach England; perhaps some day smaller hands than mine will smooth away the lines of care from father's dear face, will pay him back with joy for the hours of suffering he is now enduring. But for that hope the smooth greenness of those calm waters would be a welcomed grave.

"Morgan has seemed more like his former self since we left New York. His old fondness for me returns at times. I will be patient. Love will triumph in the end.

CHAPTER SIX

"WE have been in England over a year now, and in all that time I have had no direct word from home. I scan every American paper in the hope of finding I know not what. If I could only get some news of my dear father, if I were only sure that he is still living.

"All hope of Morgan's marrying me has completely vanished. He has not been unkind, but soon after our arrival here he gave me to understand that though our present relationship may continue as long as we both live, he will never put himself into what he terms 'the noose of matrimony.' Another fact which I soon learned was, that, although he stands at the head of his trade, he had no intention of making use of the skill by which he might make a comfortable living for both of us. He brought me here with one purpose, to support him in idleness, by singing nightly in the low concert halls. It is true he gave me fair warning before we left America, but I had pictured the whole thing in such a different light. Concert halls called up to my mind something on the Philharmonic order, and I looked forward with pleased anticipation to making my way up in this line of work. If I had failed as an opera singer I could still make use of the months of study, or effort that I had put into my voice. Perhaps with maturity it would develop possibilities that were now hidden. As to supporting him, I did not take that seriously. Even in the

face of what had happened I still thought him possessed of too much manhood to sink into such a state.

"So much for my picture of this new life. Now for the reality. Only a few weeks had elapsed when I found myself, Dolores Florenz, once New York's petted premier danseuse, singing low comic songs in a cheap concert hall that catered to an audience of smoking, drinking, brawling shop boys, stokers, barmaids and the like. The atmosphere of the place choked me. I entered the hall as I would have gone into a chamber filled with deadly gases. And all for what? So that I might keep in idleness a man who did not think enough of me to make me his wife. And yet I could not leave him. He still possessed that old fascination which held me spellbound that night at the door of my dressing room.

"As much as I loathed the place, my popularity grew steadily, and I soon had a wide circle of admirers. That meant nothing to me. My only thought was to sing my songs, collect my money, and get home, or, rather, back to the small room which was a roof over our heads, and in which I invariably found Morgan under the influence of liquor. I tried to cure him of the habit, to awaken in him a small spark of his lost manhood. I found it was useless. Then I, too, began to drink heavily. Only a miracle kept me from sinking as low as he, and that miracle took the form of an attack of delirium tremens which kept him in the hospital for over two months. When he returned he was penitent, vowed that he would never touch a drop again, and proved his desire to reform by seeking work at his old trade. But months of drinking had made his hand unsteady. The jobs entrusted to him were infrequent, and of little value.

"I had lost my engagement at the first concert hall, but I easily found another one, cheaper, filthier, less to be desired than the first; but I had to work in order to make it possible for us to exist at all. I gave my best efforts, and with Morgan's continued sobriety day after day, a new hope began to dawn in my heart. What if Fate should change her frown into a smile, should consider that I had been punished sufficiently for the thoughtless folly of youth.

"One night in late November I returned home, tired, weary, yet in some way filled with the brisk aliveness of the late fall air. As soon as I opened the door I had a sickly feeling that something unusual had happened. Yes, I had begun to hope too soon. There, stretched on the floor, fully dressed, was Morgan.

"Get up," I cried, shaking him, the reaction from my recent hopefulness giving an added touch of impatience to my voice.

"He opened his eyes and fixed them dreamily upon my face. I bent nearer. There was no taint of alcohol on his breath, but in its place a strange, spicy, aromatic odor.

"I am in paradise, in paradise," he murmured. 'How wonderfully beautiful' all things are.'

"I shook him again, for a strange fear was beginning to clutch my heart, the fear of being left alone without even this poor tie to bind me to life. I had never seen him in this condition before. Just as I was about to give up in despair, I noticed that his hand was tightly clasped about a small object. I pried it open and took from it a small ebony box, somewhat on the style of a snuff-box. Taking it to the light, I opened it, and discovered a dark, thick, pasty mass. I knew nothing of drugs, but instinct told me that a drug was what the box contained. I thought probably it was opium. Not until later did I learn that it was hashish, or Indian hemp.

"I knew it was this that had transported Morgan to paradise. Had it brought the opposite effect, I would have

eaten of it, so accustomed was I to following in the footsteps of this man who had been my companion through so many changes of fortune. I helped myself to a liberal portion, not knowing but what at the next moment I might be lying dead beside the figure on the floor. But it had no effect whatever. I removed my things, and threw myself down on the bed. Weariness after the brisk walk home had begun to set in. I lay there staring at the white wall of the small room through half-closed lids. Then suddenly it dropped away and a troop of gayly attired horsemen brandishing their lances and shouting as they came rode toward me. I crouched down in the bed to avoid being trampled beneath the horses' feet, but they passed over me, and I felt no weight, no bruise on my body. They passed away at the other side of the room, and instantly I stood at the edge of a vast forest. I looked around bewildered for a second, and then from behind the trees sprang groups of merry, laughing villagers. They joined hands and lifting their feet lightly, came dancing over the soft green grass. Next came an old man, stout and portly, carrying in his hand a huge staff, the sign of his office. His gown of red and yellow plush flowed to the ground, and as he pushed it aside, and took from the pocket a long, white scroll, I murmured:

"The bailiff."

"I could hear every word of the proclamation he read from the lord of the castle. I could see the villagers bow before him, the men with bared heads, the women with bended knees. And when he had finished a hundred fairies in shimmering costumes glided from behind the trees, in and out among the groups of villagers, winding and unwinding their many-colored streamers, until the whole room seemed filled with one moving mass of gauzy forms, tripping feet, and twirling limbs, topped by faces such as I had seen only in master paintings. I lay there powerless, my eyes fixed on that wonderful spectacle, and though I missed no movement of that fairy dance, the staff of the bailiff was not out of my sight for an instant. Suddenly he raised it quickly, and lowered it again. It was my cue in 'The Red Phantom,' and I sprang into the very midst of the dance.

"I whirled, leaped, fairly flew, now to the right, now to the left, now down the center, upon the very ends of my toes. The fairy dancers pressed in upon me, and I took part in every figure they did, as if I had known it from babyhood. Suddenly the air became filled with falling drops. It was raining, but such rain, tiny glittering lumps of gold. The drops scattered about us here, there, everywhere, covering our hair, our dresses, our bodies, converting us into golden statues. Then came a softer, gentler rain, a rain of silver, and as we danced through this it changed suddenly to a shower of blossoms, blossoms among which the red and the white rose reigned supreme.

"Then the orchestra, which had at first been soft and low, as if playing away back in the forest from which the fairy dancers had come, appeared right before me, each man playing with all his power. Slowly they filed about the dancers, their music coming as one great, glorious outburst. The man who led the procession, old, gray-haired, bent, turned and faced me. At the same moment I heard above the other instruments the blast and blare of the huge trombone which he held in his hand.

"Father," I cried, and ran to him with a glad cry of recognition.

"Then suddenly the vision faded, faded as quickly, as mysteriously as it had come, and I fell to the floor senseless, beside that other prostrate form that had also had its vision of paradise.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"THIS drug habit, once formed, takes a hold so strong that nothing short of a miracle can break it. And what wonder, when it transports one from the reality such as my life has become, to a vision which brings back even the loved ones of the happy days of youth. I have now lost all hope of becoming great, all desire of making a place for myself in the world, but I am continuing to keep a faithful though disjointed record of my life, feeling that I shall be amply repaid if a knowledge of my sufferings keeps but one person from the same pitfalls.

"Through an old friend of Morgan's he is able to keep us both supplied with this drug which transports us to a fool's paradise. After a hard evening in the music hall, an evening when the air has been heavier than usual, the odor of stale beer more nauseating, the jokes of the audience more pointed, I look forward to those moments of delightful forgetfulness. I realize that it is eating away my very life, my very soul, and yet, if I knew that the next taste would mean my last moment on earth, I would take it, even if the world held for me the precious future it does for other women of my age.

"I am singing—or at least was until to-night—at a place so low in character that the memory of the hall at which I had my first engagement seems like some pleasant dream. I have still retained sufficient pride to refuse to mingle with the drinkers, as most of the performers do, when they are not on the stage. In accordance with our agreement, the manager has a private table reserved for me, where I sit alone, or, as is often the case, until I am joined by Morgan. He is known at the hall as my brother, a precaution which in some measure protects me from the advances of the most forward of these ruffians.

"All evening the air was damp, penetrating, chilly, the fog thicker, more disagreeable than usual. As a result many were driven to seek refuge where all was bright and cheerful—that is to their way of thinking—to the music hall. The hall was already crowded when I made my appearance, but it was all the same to me. I did what I was paid to do to the best of my ability, and gave little heed to the crowd around. I can always tell though when Morgan enters the room. No matter how far back, how dim the place in which he is standing, I feel his presence through a sixth sense. To-night, just as I was finishing my second song, he came in with a young man of the dark Italian type, whose loud, boisterous applause told me at once that he had already had his full share of drink. To my shame, I knew only too well the cause of Morgan's having that boy in tow. One of his chief occupations has now become 'roper-in,' a term which applies to those who seek the acquaintance of young men out in search of adventure, invite them to drink, and then lead them to some gambling den, where they are fleeced of everything they possess. A timely warning, whispered when Morgan was absent for a moment from our table, has prevented many a youth from falling victim to his scheme.

"As soon as my numbers were over and I had seated myself at the table, Morgan presented the young man to me as Prince Geronna. I bowed in acknowledgment of the introduction, and continued to sip the glass of ale before me without giving a second thought as to whether or not he was a real prince, or simply one of those foreign youths who delight in traveling with a title, on their infrequent trips to England. The boy at once broke into extravagant praise of my voice.

"You should sing in opera in my own city of Milan," he concluded.

"The mention of opera was still a tender subject with

me. Had Morgan prompted the stranger to make this remark? If he did, it was a cruel jest. I looked steadily at the youth. I could see no guile in the eyes that were fixed admiringly upon my face.

"I can't sing in opera," I replied, trying to hide the hurt, 'you know you flatter me when you suggest such a thing, prince.'

"He assured me of the sincerity of his judgment, and then insisted upon my joining him and Morgan in a bottle of champagne. We finished this bottle and continued to drink until it was my turn to sing again. From my place on the stage I could see Morgan plying the young prince with more drink.

"I will warn him and then, if he is not too far gone to get my meaning, I may yet be able to save him," I thought, as I finished my closing number.

"As soon as I reached the table Morgan drew me to one side.

"Marry the prince," he breathed in my ear. 'Marry him now—to-night. If you refuse to do as I bid, I will kill us both,' he added, noting the look of rebellion in my eyes. 'I have looked him up carefully,' he continued. 'He is the sole representative of one of the oldest Italian families, and in his native city of Milan he is worth millions and millions of dollars. He has been here to see you three nights and declares he loved you from the very beginning. When he learned that I am supposed to be your brother, he asked me to present him, and I consented on one condition, that he marry you to-night!'

"And when he has married me, then what?" I asked, as if I were inquiring about the possible fate of some one wholly unknown to me.

"As soon as he sobers up he will pay any sum to be rid of you. We will get the money and you can return to me again and live comfortably without having to sing in these vile places.'

"Never for a moment did he deceive me into believing that he was considering my happiness in making these plans. He had visions of great sums of money from the prince, more than I could ever make in a life-time in the music halls. I could see his mind reaching forward to the day when I would be too old to procure even such an engagement as I had at present. Who would support him in idleness then? I looked into his eyes, now two glints of steel, at his mouth, that thin, straight line which always made me shudder. I knew that now, for the first time, he would take my life if I did not do his bidding. Still I refused absolutely, and he knew that I meant it.

"All right," he said soothingly, 'if you really object, we will let the plan go, but at least entertain the prince while I am absent a short time on an errand.'

"I consented willingly. This would be the time to warn the young man. I might even persuade him to leave the hall before Morgan returned.

"But the prince gave me no opportunity to say a word. My brother had promised that I would marry him, and his one thought was to get me to keep that promise. He told me of his lands in Italy, his gold, his diamonds, the palace which would be my home. He even suggested that should I so desire he would place me at the head of my own opera company, which would be under the patronage of Italian royalty.

"I have loved you but a short time, but with what intensity!" he concluded. 'To-night we will see the priest, and to-morrow you will start for Italy as my princess.'

"Can't you make her consent?" asked Morgan's voice at my side. "Well, perhaps between us we can get her to change her mind."

"I have talked so much," the prince answered hope-

lessly. 'I have promised her all my wealth, but still' she says "No."

"Then she is a fool, like most women," Morgan said gruffly. "But come; there is still champagne left, and that never goes back on a friend."

"I begged to be excused on account of the lateness of the hour."

"Sit down," Morgan hissed in my ear, as I rose to go. I sank wearily into my seat, afraid to disobey. Then the waiter came with another bottle.

"I'll do the honors," Morgan told him good-naturedly as he started to fill the glasses.

"This will be my last glass," I announced as I gazed into the sparkling liquid.

"All right, Dolores, old girl," Morgan said with an entire change of manner. "In my eagerness to keep you with us I am apt to forget that you have worked hard this evening. When you have drained that you may go."

"I raised the glass to my lips and swallowed the contents. Immediately I recognized that peculiar, bitter taste. I had experienced its results before. In a few moments that drug would reduce me to a state in which I would be wholly subject to his will. I tried to get to my feet, to leave the place before I had become a partner to his evil plot."

"Sit down," he commanded, forcing me back into the chair with a push of his hand.

"Again I strove to rise, again he pushed me back. Then I felt a tingling sensation in every nerve of my body and I knew that it was too late."

"An hour later I left a small house in the suburbs of London, left it as the Princess Geronna, bride of the young Italian nobleman, to whom, in my drugged state, I had been married, obeying the command of an evil will that was stronger than my power of resistance."

CHAPTER EIGHT

"AND now, before the memory of those quiet, peaceful days in beautiful Milan is blotted out by other scenes, I must record that short period of my life which seems like the one restful hour of slumber at dawn, after nights of feverish tossing in an agony of unrelieved pain. In starting this diary I thought with the unseeing mind of youth that the tense moments, the high spots of life, would be the ones which I would delight to relieve through its pages. Looking down from my maturer years, and viewing events in their true values, I know that these few pages are the ones that will be read and re-read like the favorite passage of some beautiful poem."

"In the first place, Morgan's plans did not work out toward the end he had in view. The prince's mind, though dulled by drink on the night of our marriage, was still clear enough to realize the step he was taking. From the first night he saw me in the music hall, his one desire had been to make me his wife. Those cheap, low surroundings, he told me afterwards, served but to increase my beauty, to emphasize my superiority to those around me. Wish to free himself of me? On the contrary, he was always seeking some means of binding me more closely to him. For some reason or other, perhaps it was the yearly allowance the prince settled on him, Morgan did not reveal our true relationship, disappointed as he was at the turn events had taken. In two weeks' time we left London and Morgan for my husband's palace at Milan. He had not exaggerated a detail in describing its beauty. Personally I would have preferred something less magnificent, less formal, less cold; but it was the approved palace of a

nobleman of wealth, and though now and then the building itself oppressed me, there were always those wonderful gardens with their shade trees, their soft fragrance, their brilliant flowers."

"And have you no more longing for the opera, my princess?" my husband would often ask me.

"And he would smile happily when I expressed my desire to remain forever within the walls of his grounds. Never once did he refer to my former surroundings, to the life I was living when he married me. He was alone in the world, free from any family interference with his alliance to one of humble birth. As for the Italian nobility and its opinion he cared nothing. His wealth, his descent, made him independent of every one. Had I wished it, he would have mingled in society, would have forced my acceptance there; but, though he often expressed a desire to show his countrymen the prize he had won, he was perfectly contented with my wish that we remain apart from the world."

"And soon there was ample reason why we should not be seen in public. The dearest wish of my heart, of every woman who is worthy of the name, was about to be fulfilled. I prayed so earnestly that my suffering might leave the little life I was to bring into the world free from all heartbreaks, that through motherhood I, too, might be born anew, I hoped that in some way this new soul might reunite me with the dear father who was never absent from my thoughts an hour. I was sure God must hear my plea. My husband was joyous at the prospect. I know he hoped that with the birth of our child I might grow to love him. He knew from the beginning that it was not my real self that had been led into a union with him in that house in the suburbs of London. He realized my gratitude for his goodness to me, my contentment to spend the rest of my days quietly with him. But not for a moment did he mistake these feelings for love. I wondered myself that this man, who was all kindness and consideration, failed to awaken one spark of the wild longing, the mad desire that I felt for that other worthless man, even when his treatment of me was most cruel. What is it in our natures that thus arrays itself against our minds, against all our finer instincts? Even the very day I knew my baby was coming into the world I could not shut the thought of Morgan from my mind, could not keep from wishing that this child had been his and mine."

"And it came, that little life we have been awaiting so eagerly—it came, and lived two hours. The feeling that surged over me when the prince gently told me that our child was dead, resembled nothing I had experienced before. Until that moment I had thought there was no realm of suffering, no depth of despair, of hopelessness, which I did not know. But this sense of loss, of aloneness, was all-enveloping. My husband in the days that followed showed the true fineness of his nature as never before. His own grief was deep. To him our child was not only a son, but the heir to his honored title, to his vast estates; but never did he let his personal sorrow intrude itself upon my suffering. Only the whiteness of his face, the hurt look in his eyes which his forced smile could not hide, revealed the anguish of his heart. I tried my utmost to love him, to shut the memory of every one else, even my father, from my thoughts, but though I clung to him more closely, and was not content when he was absent from my side for a moment, I knew still that love had not entered my heart."

"One day, months later, a visitor was announced. Few called at the palace, no one to see me, and I was curious to know who had sought me out. For one wild moment the thought came that it might be my dear father, and then the impossibility of his discovering my whereabouts left me listless, uninterested. As I entered the reception room the

man's back was towards me. Feeling my presence, he turned quickly.

"Morgan," I gasped, a feeling of numbness making me unable to approach him or withdraw from the room.

"I was sick with longing for a glimpse of my princess," he said, coming nearer, "so I left dear old London and made my way to her palace. Has she no word of welcome for an old friend, an old companion?"

"I looked at him searchingly. He had improved since the old days. Evidently he had not been drinking. I noted too with a feeling of relief that the old drug pallor had left his face. He met my gaze, knew instinctively that I was pleased with what I saw. He hastened to take advantage of that fact by letting one of his old, sweet smiles light up his face. I steeled myself against it.

"Leave this place at once," I said, not looking at him. "Leave at once, or I will have the servants put you out."

"And that's your gratitude?" he said. "Your ladyship would have her servants throw me from her palace? So be it. I will go in peace. But remember, Dolores," his voice took on the old caressing tone, "I came just because I could stay away no longer. I have missed you more than you will ever know, and only a regard for your welfare has kept me from making an effort to get you back during all those lonely, dreary months in London."

"He turned to depart, and then I could not bear to have him go. I pulled the bell cord and summoned my husband.

"My brother has come to visit us," I said, when he appeared in the doorway. If he noticed my agitation, the pallor of my face, he laid it to this unexpected meeting with one who was so dear to me. He greeted Morgan cordially, and from that moment installed him as a permanent visitor at our palace. He suspected nothing, and though he soon realized that some unseen force had entered our home to mar our hours of contentment, he was totally unaware of its source. He increased his devotion to me, fearing that even the affection he knew I felt for him was waning. Every day he came to me with some new and costly gift. Among them was a diamond of extraordinary size and brilliancy.

"Whatever you do, never part with this," he said as he fastened it on my breast. "It has been in the Geronna family for a thousand years. Should you survive me, and attempt in any way to dispose of it, I believe I would rise from my grave to stay your hand."

"I promised him solemnly that I would never part with it.

"A few weeks later my husband became very ill, with a malady that baffled our physician. I was constantly at his bedside, not entrusting his care to any of the servants. He was pleased at my devotion, though fearful that the constant nursing might injure my health.

"Just at dusk one evening in the seventh week of Geronna's illness I was preparing some delicacies for him in the small room adjoining his apartment, when I was started by a step behind me, and turned to see Morgan entering the room.

"Well, Dolores, how much longer is this sort of thing going to last?" he asked.

"What sort of thing?" I asked, adding irritably, "I do wish you would not follow me here. Some of the servants are apt to enter at any moment."

"I have attended to that," he assured me, coming nearer. "You know there is no hope of the prince's recovery, and when he dies, what do you suppose is going to become of you? His lawyer told me this afternoon that he has left you only five thousand dollars a year and that all the rest of his estate goes to the founding of a museum of fine art."

"Five thousand dollars?" I repeated. "I consider that a generous sum, far more, indeed, than I deserve."

"But where do I come in?" he continued. "You know I planned this little game and I do not intend to be left penniless. Do you know that Geronna has jewels enough in that ebony cabinet at the foot of his bed to make us both wealthy for life?"

"Morgan Dean," I whispered with all the force I could put into my words, "if you even dare hint of harm to the man who generously saved me from a fate worse than death, who has given me the only peaceful moments I have had in years, I will call the police, even though your arrest will mean mine too."

"He made no answer to that threat, but with a shrug of his shoulders left the room. I went to my husband's bedside, fearing to leave him alone for even a moment. He seemed to be growing rapidly worse. I coaxed him to eat, but he shook his head wearily, and motioned me to take the tray from his sight. I sat there scarcely breathing, watching him pass from one uneasy doze into another. In the tomb-like silence of the great palace every sound from the sick bed was exaggerated a thousandfold. Through half-closed lids I watched the fantastic shadows thrown on the wall by the solitary candle. They were company, those shadows, and I was grateful for their presence. Gradually they grew dimmer and dimmer, and finally became one with the cold gray wall. The next moment I jumped up with a start, as a hand was laid upon my shoulder. Before I could utter a sound Morgan's hand was pressed tightly over my mouth.

"Don't move, don't speak," he whispered sternly. "Listen, Dolores—the prince will die before morning and you will be left alone. Take those gems in the ebony cabinet—they are rightfully yours—and come with me. Your husband will not regain consciousness again."

"He fixed me with that steady burning gaze which I had never been able to disobey. As if in a dream, I approached the cabinet, opened it and concealed the jewels in my clothing. As we tiptoed across the marble floor we were startled by a low cry, almost a moan, from the bed. By a superhuman effort my husband had risen and was staring at us with his sunken eyes into which the shadow of death had already crept.

"I have seen and heard all," he gasped. "Restore those jewels and leave the palace at once, or I will spread the alarm and turn you over to the police."

"His wasted hand was already clutching the bell-rope. The next moment there was a smothered sound from beneath the pillow which Morgan and I held over the prince's head and the lean body twitched pitifully beneath the covers, as the last feeble breath left it.

CHAPTER NINE

"THREE weeks ago I returned to New York unannounced in the steerage of a French liner, I who might have been greeted by a throng of friends, by a group of reporters eager to recount my impressions of Europe, from the viewpoint of a world-famous dancer. Even the doubtful pleasure of the company of my partner in crime was denied me.

"When we fled from Milan that dreadful night, leaving my husband alone in that huge palace, murdered by the hands of the two whom he had befriended, we went directly to Constantinople, considering that city the last in which we would be apt to be sought by the police. There was no cause for fear, however. From the Italian papers that fell

into our hands we learned that the general opinion was that the prince had died a natural death. My sudden disappearance was commented upon as strange, and the theory was advanced that overcome by grief at my husband's death, I had taken my own life. No mention was made of the jewels.

"For months we lived in luxury on the money from the sale of the stones which Morgan disposed of one by one. Not content with the income these brought us, he was constantly urging me to part with the large diamond, Geronna's last gift. This I firmly refused to do. When he learned that this was beyond even his powers of persuasion, he left me alone in Constantinople, penniless, friendless.

"For the next few years I managed to live by any means that came to my hand, singing, tutoring in English, and even being nurse maid to children of wealthy families. In this way by degrees I worked my way back to Paris, and then to London. The sole object I had in view was to return to America to learn what had become of my dear father. A few months later I was on my way.

"As soon as the usual landing examinations were over and I was free to go my way in that great changed city of New York, I grasped my little satchel marked 'D. F.', the initials of my maiden name which, of course, I had resumed, and set out to find some trace of my father. I went directly to our old address.

"Florenz, Florenz?" repeated the sharp-featured maid of all work who answered my ring. "There ain't no one by that name rooming here and there hain't been in the last six months."

"But the gentleman I seek had his home here about ten years ago," I hastened to assure her.

"Ten years ago," she snapped back. "Well, get this, will you? I ain't here to run upstairs and answer the bell for nuts that is looking for fellars that played hide-and-goose with Adam behind the fig-trees."

"With that she slammed the door in my face. I made my way uptown. At the stage carpenters' union headquarters I learned that John Martin had married years before and was now living out West. No one there had even heard my father's name.

"I had a few dollars in my purse, enough I thought to live on for a couple of weeks. But I had no knowledge of the increased war prices in the city. In a week I found myself without a penny, and without a mouthful of food for forty-eight hours. I had tried to find employment, but my appearance was too shabby to lead any one to give me even a trial. I could not beg. There was only one thing for me to do, to pawn my diamond. It would be for only a short time, I argued. A little money would put me on my feet, and then, surely, I could find some means of making a livelihood. I approached the door of a pawnshop timidly. I had never been inside one before, and I dreaded the questions I might be asked. In the gloomy dusk of the shop I could distinguish the forms of a couple of men and hastened to the nearest window and requested a loan on the diamond, which I held in the palm of my hand. The broker's eyes widened in amazement as he caught sight of the stone's size and brilliancy. He reached out to take it from me. As he did so my palm closed tightly over my treasure and I drew back in terror. There directly over the man's head I seemed to see Geronna, his sunken eyes burning into mine, his thin finger pointing at me, his words burning into my very soul:

"Should you attempt to part with that jewel I believe I should rise from my grave to stay your hand."

"Forcing my trembling limbs to do my bidding, I hastened from the shop before the broker could recover from

his astorishment sufficiently to stop me. I slid into the shelter of a doorway near by and then, when I was sure that no attempt was being made to follow, I hurried on with no definite destination in view. Five blocks away I stopped for breath. I heard steps behind, but I dared not turn. The steps came up to me and then stopped. I could hear the suspense no longer. Slowly I brought my eyes around. A shabby, slouchy man, with bloated face and gray hair, was staring intently at me. My gaze left his and traveled slowly down his face. That thin, hard line, surely—— At that moment the man spoke.

"Don't you know me, Dolores?" he asked. "Evidently you did not when you saw me in the pawnbroker's shop a few minutes ago. And what has come over the princess that she is attempting to pawn her beloved husband's diamond? I thought that was 'until death doth us part'."

"When one has not tasted food for forty-eight hours one is apt to do most anything," I replied. I leaned heavily against a nearby post, fearing that I might fall to the ground from weakness. There was no doubt in my mind that in that case Morgan would have taken my jewel and made off with it.

"Really as bad as that," he said with a pretense of sympathy. "Come with me. I haven't much loose coin myself, but it will never be said that I refused to feed an old pal."

"He led me to a nearby coffee house. When the food was set before me I devoured it like some ravenous animal. With the inner warmth revived my hopes, my desire to live returned. Why should I not make this man supply my needs until I was in a position to shift for myself? Surely he owed me that much. But I knew why he had bought me this meal, why he would continue to look after me while he thought there was any hope. He did not delay long in making his plan known.

"You will find it hard to dispose of that stone without creating suspicion, Dolores," he said. "Let me take it. I know where I can find a buyer who will not ask any questions. Then we can meet and divide the money."

"I have decided not to part with it," I answered firmly.

"As you will," he said, but I knew that he had not so easily given up his determination to possess the jewel. "I have a little engraver's shop under a lodging house near by. Why not come there and pay me a visit? I still hold the key to the gates of paradise. My friend continues to keep me well supplied. Come down with me now and we will test its old power."

"I will join you later," I told him, having no intention of going to his shop with the stone in my possession. It would be safer in the mattress of my bed. No one would look for jewels in such a room.

"In the early evening I sought the address he had given me. It was a ground floor shop, under a cheap lodging house which I remember had been a quiet, home-like hotel when my father and I lived in that neighborhood. Morgan was waiting for me.

"This is where I work, Dolores," he said. "You see, I have no sweet singer now to see that my wants are supplied."

"My eyes swept every corner of that dingy little shop and living quarters combined. The floor was dirty and bare except for a small rugged rug in one corner of the room. In the center there was a trap door.

"Where does that lead to?" I inquired curiously.

"To the sub-cellar," he answered in an offhand way. "It was formerly a coal bin, but now I understand the tenants use it as a dumping place for ashes and refuse."

"He raised the door to let me look down.

"Oh, close it," I exclaimed, as a dreadful odor came up into the room.

At that moment the door was thrown open and a short, stout Irish woman, with snapping black eyes, came into the shop. She stood near the threshold without speaking, taking in every detail of the situation.

"Mary, this is Mrs. Geronna, a customer of mine," Morgan said finally, "My wife."

"I saw you entering as I came down the street and I decided I'd come in and wait for my husband," she said to me.

"I am going right away, Mrs. Dean," I assured her.

"Come to-morrow night," Morgan whispered, as he held the door open for me to pass out.

"I visited him the next night, and every night for two weeks. The drug was taking a stronger hold on me than ever. I knew Morgan had but one object in view, and I knew that he would continue to give me the drug until he had accomplished its object.

"Last night, though, something happened which I hope will cure my taste for this dream-inducer, this powerful drug that is shattering my nerves and body. After I had eaten of it and thrown myself on Morgan's cot to sleep, my pleasant dreams of flowers and fairies, of castles and gardens, suddenly disappeared and I saw the room I was in just as it really is. I thought I had awakened and tried to rise, but to my dismay I could not move; I was chained to the cot just as securely as though iron bands had been clasped about my body. I saw Morgan get up from the floor, pin a soiled quilt over the window, and then approach my bed.

"Shall I kill her now?" he was saying to himself. "Shall that diamond be mine to-night, or shall I let her live another day?"

"He crossed the shop to the press. I tried to cry out, but could utter no sound. In a second he had returned with a large stone in his hand. I could hear my bones crunch and break as he rained blow after blow upon my face and body. When he was sure that all life was gone, he began to search for the diamond. Rapidly he went over my clothes, through the knotted handkerchief I held in my hand.

"Damn it," he breathed at the fruitlessness of his search. "Her hair," he murmured, another thought striking him.

With no gentle hand he began clawing at my hair, then suddenly the wig which I had had made when my hair began to come out after the birth of my little baby, and which I always wore, came off in his hand, leaving my closely shaved head exposed to view. He uttered a cry of terror as he let my body fall back on the bed. All thoughts of the diamond seemed to have left his mind. His sole idea now seemed to be to hide the evidence of his crime. Taking something from a drawer near by he fastened it securely around my head, thus holding the wig in place and hiding my ghastly face. He then opened the trapdoor and threw my body down into that dark cellar, into that hole with its ashes, its refuse, its foul odors.

Scarcely making a sound, he closed that trapdoor, grabbed his hat, and hastened to leave the room. As he had his hand on the latch, the screen in the farther end of the room moved, and his wife came out into the dim light!

"I saw all that happened," she shrieked, pointing an accusing finger at him. "I knew you couldn't be away from home night after night for two whole weeks for any good purpose. I've been hiding behind that screen since dusk. "Morgan" is it? Well, Morgan, I know enough about you now to send you flying to the electric chair, and thankful I'll be to rid the world of a pest like you."

"Something in the shrill tone of the woman's voice woke me from my dream. I sprang from the bed shaking with

fear and dread. There lay Morgan on the floor, deep in sleep. Without waiting to find my hat I opened the door and climbed the few steps that led from his shop to the street. Back in my cheerless room, the scenes of that dream still haunt me. Was it a last warning sent by an ever-patient Providence to save one of the lowliest from such an end? I believe it was. Perhaps the spirit of my father, ever watchful, helped bring the message to me. I have paid my last visit to the shop under that old hotel, and I pray that I have tasted the last morsel of that deadly drug."

CHAPTER TEN

MILLS laid down the old diary and I sat up with a start. So vividly had those scenes been painted that I was surprised to find myself still in the comfortable library of my friend's apartment.

"What do you think of it?" the detective asked, as he reached for his neglected glass.

"Looks to me like conclusive proof that our engraver, Louis West, did the deed," I answered.

"In a way it does, but still—." My friend was again in the midst of one of his dreamy silences.

When I left him that night I asked his permission to take the script with me. On my way home I passed the Sextus House. There was a light in the superintendant's window, and I stopped in for a friendly chat, as I had often done in the old newspaper days. Naturally our conversation drifted toward the murder.

"Here's an interesting script that throws some light on the subject," I said, handing him the diary of Dolores Florenz.

He skimmed it through and then grunted.

"Funny thing," he said, reluctantly removing his pipe from his mouth, "that might have been written by the woman whose body was found in the cellar."

"Might have been?" I repeated, a shade impatiently. "In my mind, there is no doubt that it was."

"But I know the man who wrote it," he answered calmly. "He told me the story. It was returned to him by an editor the day before he shot himself."

"But the initials on the bag, D. F., those were the initials of the girl in the diary."

"Which does not prevent them from standing for Dick Freeman, writer of popular thrillers."

"But the bag contained articles of women's apparel," I persisted.

"That's what your dope writers said. I happened to be in the cellar when the bag was opened. There was nothing in it but an old briar pipe marked D. F., a man's undershirt, and a pair of trousers. Poor old Dick, he'd have been a rich man to-day with all his wild stories if he hadn't been too chummy with old boy Rum."

"And doesn't the description of the man at all resemble Louis West, the engraver?" I asked, holding to a last hope.

"Not a bit, not a bit," the superintendent answered. "Besides, he was never out of New York in all his life until he went to Philadelphia; and he wasn't an engraver at all, just a common, ordinary printer, and a bad one at that."

I left the Sextus House with my mind in a peculiarly bewildered state. If that diary really belonged to the woman whose body was found in the cellar, then my mystery was a mystery no longer. If Dick Freeman, in collaboration with his old chum, Rum, wove that weird yarn, then what was the matter with the editor of the thriller who turned it down?

SHADOWING A RED UMBRELLA

By JOHN D. BELL

It was not the kind of red umbrella which, on a summer day, makes patches of picturesque color among the greenery of the parks or along the gray sand of the seaside.

It was of a peculiar, dark hue, as if it had been dyed in red ink; and it careened against me on the narrow pavement of a crowded cross street at the southern extremity of the city.

The violent jostle was what attracted my attention to its peculiarity.

As it caromed against my own, and my hat went spinning into the streaming gutter, I very naturally sent an inquiring glance after it.

It was already disappearing around a corner.

But in that quick glance I not only remarked its extraordinary hue, but I also had a fairly satisfactory view of the individual carrying it.

He was a tall man, florid of feature, and stout of frame, with a thick, blonde mustache, and blonde hair closely cut; his age might have been anywhere between thirty and forty.

He seemed in desperate haste, and uncommonly preoccupied in mind. And as he turned the corner he appeared to be directing his rapid footsteps into the entrance of a small store occupied by a dealer in gentlemen's furnishing goods.

"I shall recognize you again, my friend, if I ever have the pleasure of seeing you," I thought, wrathfully, as I picked my brand-new and mud-christened silk hat from the oozy rivulet beside the curb.

The rain was falling in a wretched, foggy drizzle and the pavement was slippery with mud and patches of ice rapidly thawing.

In the execrable walking the incident passed from my mind.

By the time I had transacted some pressing business and presented myself at the office, I had forgotten it altogether.

"You have come around just as I happen to want you," my chief said. "We want you to take Bob's place to-night."

"What's the matter with Bob?"

"He has discovered something which looks like a new clue. If he is right there will be more than one arrest made within the next twenty-four hours."

"Has he struck the trail of an organized gang?"

"There is more than one engaged in the making of the counterfeit notes, but at the present outlook their operations will be nipped in the bud."

"The Mulhorne girl still refuses to talk?"

"Not a word can be got from her lips. I believe she will die in prison before she will make any explanation whatever about the spurious money found in her possession."

"She must be either an accomplice or a dupe. The mistake was in locking her up; if she had been left at liberty and closely shadowed we should have been at the bottom of the mystery long ago."

The case was an interesting one.

The girl, Carrie Mulhorne, had purchased some trifling article in an up-town fancy store, and had offered in payment a fifty-dollar banknote.

The large figure of the bill, together with the small value of the purchase, had excited suspicion at once.

An instant's examination showed the bill to be one of the most coarsely and unskillfully executed counterfeits ever tendered for circulation.

To all inquiries concerning how she had obtained it the girl refused to answer a word.

She had attempted to rush away as if overwhelmed with terror.

But the proprietor, who was an old gentleman of an excitable and choleric temper, had promptly overtaken her, and handed her over to an officer.

After her arrest her purse was discovered to be crammed with the bogus stuff.

Whether she had managed to buy the "greep goods" as a venture of her own, or whether she was the innocent agent of the guilty parties, could not be guessed.

From the first she had kept an obstinate and absolute silence.

She had been held for trial, and in the meantime the bank learned that quite a number of the counterfeits had been passed or tendered in several different quarters.

The bank officials had immediately secured Secret Service detectives; and at the time I was detailed upon the case I was aware of all the principal points of consequence, and the items of progress also.

"The girl was locked up before the case was submitted to us," my superior reminded me. "But it doesn't matter now! Bob had tracked his game pretty nearly to cover! Another day or two will bring the rascals to the light of justice."

"And I am wanted to shadow the den he thinks he has spotted."

"You are to go inside and take a survey of the premises. The dies and plates may be concealed there. You will not be interrupted; the men who hired the place leave every night at dark, and do not return until morning. There is a duplicate key provided for the opportunity."

I took the oddly-shaped key my superior handed over, and left the office.

But I must confess I did not relish the job.

The arrest of Carrie Mulhorne had, of course, frightened the suspected counterfeiters into a suspending of operations, and into desperate methods of concealing their implements.

The place I was to inspect was a dismantled and abandoned barge, moored at a wharf where the river was skirted by a densely populated tenement district on the East Side.

Two men of an appearance which my fellow detective had considered highly suspicious had hired the barge with the ostensible purpose of ascertaining if she could be repaired, and if so of becoming her purchasers.

One of those two men was believed to be the brother or lover of the girl Carrie Mulhorne. He had been her frequent visitor at the house where she was employed as nurse-maid; and he had also been circumstantially identified as one of the individuals who had tendered a spurious banknote and failed to get genuine currency in exchange.

It was still early although the foggy drizzle had shrouded the dusk in obscurity when I reached the barge.

I listened a moment before I stepped upon the deck, which, with the ebbing tide, had lowered several feet below the string-piece of the deserted pier.

But everything was still.

I jumped aboard, and, whistling carelessly, proceeded to survey everything from binnacle to hatchways.

I heard no sound but my own footsteps, and saw no light but the flicker of a street lamp, dim and indistinct through the foggy dusk.

But the darkness and silence were deceptive, as it proved.

By the light of the lantern with which I had provided myself I unlocked the padlock of one of the hatches and descended the ladder-like steps into the hold.

I had scarcely let myself down from the last steep step when a gruff and startled voice called upon me to halt.

Clinching my right hand defensively, I uplifted the lantern in my left to behold two men whose appearance in the uncertain gloomy light at first struck me as being threatening and most villainous.

"What for you sneaking down in my barge? You tink to steal somethings, yah?" the foremost demanded in tones of mingled alarm and anger.

I lowered my lantern and laughed heartily in my surprise.

The startled men before me were old acquaintances. They were two of the most inoffensive and industrious property owners in the tenement district which skirted that portion of the river.

"I am after something I don't think you would like to have found secreted in your barge, Jake," I said. "I am in search of certain articles which possibly have been left behind by the men who hired her of you."

"They bad mens, you tink—yah? They nothing leave here. All they takes away. The big trunk; and the somethings in bags I not understand. They not pays me for mine barge. They says she not of what they would bargain make. I am at one great trouble! What I would have to do somebodys must tells me. They use mine barge; they promise—say of the goot pay; they goes away and nothing leaves; must I not to the law go for mine rights?"

"When did they take their things away?" I asked, as I looked searchingly around the hold of the barge.

"They go just one minute. You not meet them, yah?"

I heard the question, but I was too absorbed in a sudden discovery to speak in reply.

Just beside me, where the disturbed dust showed that a box or trunk of some kind had been removed, the uneven planking of the floor was stained and splashed with what looked like blood.

But a closer scrutiny revealed the marks as the fresh drippings from an umbrella, which had been leaned against one of the huge rib timbers of the hold.

"One of these men carried a red umbrella—what did he look like?" I inquired.

The owner of the old barge gave me a description which tallied exactly with that of the tall, stout, florid man I had met in the down-town street.

I was amazed, and angry with the way I had been tricked by fate.

If I had only known the man was one of the suspected counterfeiters I should have begun trailing the red umbrella then and there and might have saved myself unnecessary trouble and some danger, too.

With not a little irritation I clambered back upon the pier.

I crossed to the opposite side, and had paused to deliberate what course I had best pursue.

I had neither seen nor heard anybody, but at the instant a red umbrella appeared beside me as suddenly and noiselessly as if it had sprung by magic out of the ground.

Before I could recover from my astonishment a clinched fist shot out with terrific force, and I staggered back to fall headlong over the string-piece.

As I flung out my arms with an instinct to save myself, I clutched a length of rusted chain which seemed to have been caught and wedged between the string-piece and the flooring timber of the pier.

It stopped my fall, but my weight was sufficient to loosen it, and I felt myself being lowered link by link into the slushy ice of the slip.

Fortunately there was a row-boat fastened to one of the piles beneath, and by a last desperate effort I succeeded in flinging myself into it.

There was a loud splash as the little boat lurched in the icy slush, and at the sound I heard footsteps running swiftly from the wharf.

My assailant had waited until he was pretty certain he had settled my detective business for good and all, and then he had taken to his heels.

With some difficulty I unfasted the boat, and presently effected a safe landing a few piers below.

There I turned the boat over to the care of a watchman, and darted down-town.

I had walked a half dozen blocks, and was about boarding the car which had finally overtaken me, when I saw the figure of my assailant standing near a street lamp just ahead.

I let the car pass, and keeping in the shadow of the buildings, I went toward him.

I was not mistaken.

It was the man with the odd red umbrella.

And just before him stood a light express wagon, or truck, which a balky horse had backed into the open space before one of the river front warehouses.

In the wagon was a cheaply made trunk and a solidly made box of moderate size.

In an instant I knew the box and trunk were those which had been taken from the barge.

I had not been ordered to seize the articles; I had simply been instructed to make an inspection without exciting observations. We had no positive evidence against the men, or, at least, I had not enough to warrant my interfering just then.

"Take the critter out of harness, and see if you can't get another, Joe. Something must be done, or I shall be obliged to dump the load in the river," the man with the umbrella said wrathfully, as the balky beast refused to stir.

"I think we will take charge of that load," some one remarked quietly, and I turned to see my fellow detective and a couple of police officers approaching.

My first thought was to prevent the escape of the individual with the red umbrella, whom I had noticed starting back with a hand slipping toward his pistol pocket.

I sprang toward him and had a hand upon his collar, when he whirled upon me like a tiger, and with one terrific bound wrenched himself free.

It was done with such unexpected suddenness and dexterity that the man was beyond sight and hearing almost before we realized he was escaping.

One of the officers started in pursuit, the other stood guard over the driver of the truck, while my fellow detective and myself inspected the load.

It was what we had suspected. There were parcels of

not only counterfeit banknotes, but there was a quantity of bogus coin also. And there were the implements and material for making both.

The driver of the truck looked astounded.

He was a handsome young fellow with as frank and honest a face as I ever beheld.

"I didn't know anything about the stuff," he declared, emphatically, and with what seemed genuine consternation.

"Did you not supply Carrie Mulhorne with counterfeit money?" I asked, as I took him away a prisoner.

He had admitted she was his sweetheart.

"I did not," she said, with emphasis. "I don't know how she got hold of it. I don't even know the name of the scoundrel who has got me in this scrape."

"That's strange! You have been pretty closely associated with him in the matter."

"I have carried his boxes and parcels to the express office! Was I to be curious about the contents? Was I to disbelieve what he told me? He paid just as any other man would have done, and I have my living to make."

In spite of Joe Vadley's honest looks and emphatic assertion of innocence, the case was turning rather dark against him.

He was identified as having attempted to exchange one of the spurious bills for good currency. At the time the bill had been declined as bad, and the young fellow's astonishment had saved him from any disagreeable consequences.

But this was now brought up against him.

"That scoundrel sent me to change the note for him," was Joe's explanation. "I thought it was good enough; I thought he supposed it so too."

In the meantime the man with the red umbrella had not been captured. He seemed to have disappeared as utterly as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up when he wrrenched himself free from my grip.

The next morning I strolled into the down-town store which I fancied he had entered the afternoon before.

I was not wrong.

When he turned the corner after jostling against me, he had gone directly into the place.

And I had gained a straight clue to his identity and his whereabouts at last.

"He is one of our customers and he stops at the Umpire House. His name is Dalgol," the proprietor of the store informed me.

I took an officer with me and went straight to the small hotel specified.

We were ushered without the slightest objection to the room occupied by Mr. Dalgol.

"Come in," growled a fierce voice, as we tapped at his door.

But he was prepared for us.

He stood in the center of the room, a revolver in each hand.

It needed but a glance to see that the man was a lunatic.

And so he was afterward proved.

He was overpowered after a terrible struggle, and taken to prison. From there he was afterward consigned to an insane asylum, where he died after a few months of close restraint.

He had been an engraver, and had long been subject to periods of insanity in a mild form. It was in one of these periods that his crazy brain devised the scheme of counterfeiting coin and bank-notes.

Joe Vadley and pretty Carrie Mulhorne were both honorably acquitted.

The girl had received the bogus money by mail. She had supposed it a gift from her lover, who by economy and a little shrewd speculation was rapidly acquiring quite a competence.

When she learned the money was spurious her fears for her lover had sealed her lips.

But investigation proved that the crazy Dalgol had mailed it to her.

Her arrest had been caused by the freak of a madman, as was proved beyond a doubt.

She is now Mrs. Joe Vadley, and her handsome husband is one of the most prosperous young men of the city.

MEASURING A MILLIONTH OF AN INCH

"If we take two ordinary solids an inch thick and place them together we may get a figure 2.01 inches thick, or 2.001 inches thick, but we will never by any chance get a figure exactly two inches thick," says the *Scientific American*. "This statement is made without reference to the consideration that the alleged one inch blocks will fail to measure exactly an inch, for this is not the dominant factor. The big hitch is, that the faces which we have placed together do not fit. They may fit very nicely so far as we can see or feel; but when we get to talking about hundred-thousandths of an inch we are bound to recognize that their irregularities rule the situation. They are in actual contact in half a dozen places at the most, where high spots of the one meet high spots of the other; elsewhere there is space between them, just as surely as there is space between the carpet and the floor."

In Washington they have a set of steel blocks invented by a Swede named Johanson, which are guaranteed to be so accurately made that their opposite faces are flat, parallel and a specified distance apart, with no possible error exceeding one one-hundred thousandths of an inch. And Major William E. Hoke of St. Louis has made blocks that are more than ten times more accurate than these!

To get the sum of several of either of the blocks with absolute precision they must be worked together and slid

about on one another to force out all particles of air and dust. This is called wringing. When wrung in this way the blocks adhere so closely that they resist a pull of ninety pounds per square inch before separating.

Johanson thought they were held together by molecular attraction, and that if the surfaces could be made absolutely perfect their molecules would be so close together after wringing that they would seize upon each other and actually coalesce.

The Bureau of Standards offers another explanation. When the blocks are absolutely clean and dry they will not wring. They must have a trace of oil on their surfaces. The bureau believes that wringing is a manifestation of surface tension on the part of the oil. All fluids show surface tension; that of water is so strong that it will float a needle. The molecules throughout the interior of the mass have neighbors on all sides; those at the surface have the same cohesive power, but fewer neighbors on which to exercise it, therefore they take an extra tight grip on each other.

Now the incredibly thin layer of oil between two wrung surfaces is practically all surface, therefore its tension must be extraordinary, and the bureau suggests that it is this tension that makes the blocks cling together.

THE DRAGON HANDKERCHIEF

By FANNIE FINN

PART FIRST

I WAS at one time called upon to investigate a hotel robbery of a somewhat peculiar character.

The victim was the junior member of a rich old firm dealing in dry goods in the wholesale line.

He was a bachelor of about thirty-five, attractive personality, of rather convivial habits, and inclined to high living.

He—I will call him Stanton Grame—occupied an elegant suite of apartments in one of the centrally located and most fashionable hotels.

Mr. Grame had been traveling through the northern portion of the State, partly for pleasure and partly to collect certain bills due the firm from small merchants in different towns.

He collected several thousand dollars when he was within three hours' ride by rail from the city, arrived after banking hours, and went directly from the depot to his hotel.

The theft was committed before he retired, and probably while he was dozing in his chair after an evening at the theater and a rather late champagne supper afterwards.

He was rather loth to disclose the entire particulars until I assured him that as he had placed the case in my hands I must insist on knowing all there was to reveal.

It seemed, while he was on his way to his rooms, he had come face to face on the staircase with an old acquaintance, a beautiful girl whom he had met some months before while he was on one of his periodical trips to Europe.

At that time she was playing as a variety actress at one of the better theaters, and was known as Signora Vestrella.

As she had not been long in the city and had not yet secured an engagement he quite naturally proposed that they spend the evening together in some sort of amusement.

They returned after midnight, and he had parted with Signora Vestrella for the night in the ladies' parlor, which, by the way, was on the same floor with his own apartments. Then he passed on to his own rooms and flung himself into a chair to enjoy a cigar.

He had not taken many whiffs before he yielded to a feeling of drowsiness.

Aroused by a stealthy sound near him, by the odor of some penetrating perfume, he remembered springing from his chair, of taking a few steps forward and falling.

But he remembered nothing more.

When he came to his senses he was lying as he had fallen. It was late in the morning, and there was a group of excited people rushing into the room.

His prolonged insensibility was the effect of chloroform, or some other powerful drug, combined probably with the fatigue of the day and the champagne he had taken with his late supper.

"Was the signora aware you had all that money about you?" I asked.

"If you suspect poor little Vestrella you are on the wrong track. I had rather the money and the thief went together than have her insulted by such infamous conjectures," he said.

"What I suspect doesn't matter. It is part of my duty to investigate the suspicions of others. But let me tell you, if I had not interfered a little while ago, Signora Vestrella would now be in a cell in the Tombs."

Mr. Grame sprang to his feet with his hands clinched and his eyes flashing fire.

"There is a double motive now in finding the real criminal," he said quite calmly. "She must be cleared of these outrageous suspicions! You do that, and you can command your own reward."

But appearances were very damaging against the signora, and I was not certain my interference would prevent her speedy arrest if some counteracting evidence was not immediately brought to light.

It was a hall-boy who had raised the alarm as to Stanton Grame's insensible condition. He was passing the door of Mr. Grame's parlor. The door was slightly open as he accidentally glanced that way. He saw the pretty little actress standing in the middle of the room, and Stanton Grame lying like a dead man at her feet. But when at his outcry several persons had hurried to the room she was nowhere visible.

Among the stolen money there had been a fifty-dollar bank-note marked in one corner with a heavily-lined blue cross in ink of that color. That note the signora had tendered to the clerk that same morning in advance payment for her room.

She had been the first one to see him in the morning; she had been the last one the night before. All this array of circumstantial evidence with her own confused reticence concerning the matter had excited suspicion at once.

"How did you happen in his parlor?" I asked her.

"I was passing; I hear groaning," she said in her broken lip. "The door not fast, so I go in. I see him, and the boy call at that minute. I thought him dead, my good friend, and I so shocked I went in terror quick away."

I was about to question her concerning the marked bank-note when my attention was attracted by the glimpse of a pink silk handkerchief tucked in a pocket of her bodice.

It was of a novel and most curious pattern. The pink was of a dull pale tint, and the figure of a dragon in jade dull green filled the center and coiled around the edges.

A pink silk handkerchief was the clue I had adopted in the beginning. In my examination of Mr. Grame's rooms I had found a handkerchief damp yet and smelling of chloroform. And that handkerchief was precisely like the one Signora Vestrella had in her possession.

"Signora," I began abruptly in a random guess, "was the pink handkerchief a gift, and did the giver early this morning when you saw him present you with a fifty-dollar bank-note?"

"You guess right? Perhaps yes—perhaps no. I tells you nothing," was her answer.

I was completely puzzled. Everything was against her, and yet her manner was not of conscious guilt. There was one thing which seemed inconsistent with the suspicion that she was the thief. Grame's parlor door had been opened from the outside in the simplest sort of fashion. The key had been turned in the lock by a pair of burglar's nippers; the bolt had been pushed back by a wire fashioned for the purpose.

Both these articles the thief had neglected to take away. I had found them lying on the floor where they had undoubtedly been dropped in a sudden alarm as Grame sprang from his chair.

In my experience a female rarely resorts to burglar's tools. She manages to effect her purposes in other ways.

"I spent the remainder of the day in the hotel and vicinity and caught a fleeting glimpse of one individual upon whom I had determined to keep a sharp eye. He was a long-limbed, wiry-built, genteelly-dressed young man, with a keen countenance and furtive gray eyes.

While I was examining the room I had seen him passing through the hall. While I was talking with the signora I had heard a peculiarly muffled footstep, and had looked up to see him gliding by.

I found he was registered as "Alvan Ackley," and for the night only.

When he came in I was strolling idly along the corridor between the office and the staircase to the ladies' parlor, and I quietly stepped into a corner of the hall to observe his movements without being observed.

He went up the stairs two at a step, with the rapid, noiseless, wiry bounds of a catamount.

Some one seemed to meet him on the landing.

And as I stepped from my corner and looked upward I saw the Signora Vestrella.

"I couldn't go without one more word with you," Alvan Ackley was saying. "Won't you change your mind, little one, and come with me as my wife?"

She shrank back from him with a gesture of undisguised repugnance.

He caught her hand in a grasp so furious she winced with pain.

"You will be glad of my love one of these days—glad to come to me when you learn that the fellow Grame will never offer you what I offer," he said in a sharp, jealous whisper. "I didn't mean to be rough, little one," he said, more kindly. "And whether you ever consent to be my wife or not I mean to stand by you until you get an engagement. If anything should happen out of the common send me a line to Wilobeach. Take care of yourself."

With that he turned and descended the stairs.

As he whirled toward the office he saw me, stopped short, and the uneasy, furtive expression of his keen features changed to something simply diabolical.

The next second he passed me with his swinging stride, tossed his check to the clerk, grabbed his valise and walked out of the hotel.

I followed him out, and for several blocks, at a distance sufficient to keep him well in view.

Finally he stopped and put down his valise. The night was very dark; the neighborhood an unusually quiet one, and dimly lighted by a single street lamp.

All at once he swung his valise into his other hand and turned as if to retrace his steps.

It is not often a detective falls into a trap with his eyes and ears both open, but I must confess I did in this instance.

While I was watching him with interest he paced slowly back again. And then like a flash he disappeared in what, through the gloom, seemed to be an alley.

There was a tenement on one side, and on the other an ordinary private dwelling, and I supposed the passage to be a short-cut through to the next street.

With my hand on my revolver I hurried into the passage after him. I had not taken a dozen steps forward when a figure shot before and past me, an iron gate clanged behind me, and I looked back to perceive Ackley snapping a padlock into a staple of the bars.

The fellow had outwitted me beautifully.

The fellow laughed as he strode away and left me a prisoner, as helpless for the moment as if I had been in a Sing Sing dungeon.

The gate was at least ten feet high; on each side of me were the blank windowless walls of the two buildings, and at the back was a private stable. As I wondered how I was going to get out of the predicament a brawny form dashed through the obscurity, and huge fingers like digits of steel clutched me by the collar. Before I could speak or move a muscle I was hurled violently to the ground, and the brawny rascal was holding the muzzle of a pistol against my head.

He was one of the men employed about the private stable without doubt, and he supposed I was some prowler who had forced my way upon the premises with felonious intentions, and he had made up his mind to deal with me accordingly.

I doubled my fists, and with the one knocked the weapon from his grip, and with the other struck him a thrust in the breast which sent him reeling a yard away.

"What's the matter with you? If you had given me a chance to speak I should have told you that business as an officer brought me here," I said sternly as he righted himself.

"Oh, you can't play that game on me," he growled. "Officers don't carry burglar's keys to unlock stable-way gates, not as I've heard. I rather reckon the key as opened that 'ar padlock to-night is out of the same kit as let a thieving scallawag into the house when the silver was hooked a week ago."

"Here is your pistol, old fellow," said I, picking up his weapon and handing it to him. "And you can have mine, too, if you want it. And now, I want to hear all about this burglary."

"I want to know how you got in here fust, and what your business is," he answered doggedly.

I told him as much as I thought necessary.

"You had better speak to the boss about it, I reckon," he replied.

I was not averse to that arrangement, and after some delay I was finally admitted to an audience with the master of the house.

The family had been in the habit of using daily a breakfast and dinner service of old-fashioned silverware, solid and valuable, and most of it had always been kept on the buffet and in a cabinet closet which was located in the dining-room.

One night, about ten days before, one or two members of the family had been aroused by the sound of the iron gate opening into the stable-way closing with an unusual clash. Nothing more was thought about the matter, however, until the next morning, when it was discovered that

the silver was gone. A rear door, which one of them remembered carefully locking and bolting, was found open.

"The silver would have been in the melting-pot before we could have got trace of it; and where was the use of reporting our loss?" the master of the house remarked.

But I learned enough to convince me I had struck the trail which would lead me to the perpetrator of the Grame robbery.

It was quite late when I left the scene of the evening's adventures and started home.

I spent the most of the following forenoon in trying to ascertain something about the antecedents of the man Ackley.

About noon I went up to the hotel again.

I wanted another interview with Stanton Grame before I started on the track of the man I suspected.

An officer entered just before me who held a warrant for the arrest of Signora Vestrella. The pretty little actress was just passing through the main hall when he stopped her.

She seemed dumb with amazement, and was badly frightened.

"For what you want me? I do not understand!" she panted at last.

"You must come with me, madam. You will know why soon enough."

"But I must have a dress different—my bonnet, my cloak," said the signora, glancing at her pretty house gown of some light, belaced material.

The officer permitted her to go to her room.

Meanwhile he stationed himself on guard on the landing before her door. Five minutes went by—ten—a quarter of an hour.

"Make haste in there," cried the impatient officer, tapping upon the slightly-open door.

Three or four persons had gone up the stairs, and as many more had come down.

Among the latter I had noticed a lady in heavy mourning, with a profusion of blonde hair shining through the black crape veil, which shrouded her from head to feet.

She carried a crutch, and limped painfully as she went slowly down on her way to the street.

Another five minutes elapsed—ten—another fifteen.

The officer was getting angry. I heard him mutter some wrathful order and push open the door with a bang.

A second more I saw him coming down alone.

"Confound it all! The girl has given me the slip," he spluttered as he brushed the sweat drops from his wrathful, red face.

I knew instantly that the woman in mourning with the crutch was the signora. The crape, the crutch and the blonde wig had undoubtedly been among her stage costumes.

It had taken her but a moment to assume one of her theatrical rôles; she had watched her opportunity while the officer was pacing up and down the landing.

While his back was turned she had slipped from her room and eluded him.

I knew that it was more than likely that in her terror of what threatened the signora would attempt to seek Alvan Ackley. To follow her would be to find him eventually. I hurried to the depot.

Among the crowd awaiting at the station for the Wilo-beach train it was not long before I espied the signora. She had discarded the crutch, blonde wig and heavy crape veil. But she still wore the black dress and bonnet; she had also muffled a fleecy white scarf about her pale, brunette face.

It was about sundown when we left the train at Wilo-beach. The signora consulted some address she drew from her purse; and after looking thoughtfully about, turned into an almost deserted by-street. Presently she stopped before the number which had evidently been indicated in the address.

It was a drinking saloon, frequented by the rough clam fishers and the laborers employed around the landings. The signora looked astonished and horrified, and shrank away as if in despair.

"Did you expect to find Alvan Ackley here?" I inquired as I abruptly walked up beside her.

"Yes," was her answer, made with wonder but without hesitation.

As gently and cautiously as I could I advised her to be perfectly frank with me, and hinted also as much as I thought prudent concerning Ackley's association with the Grame robbery.

"You mean he the thief? You mean because I had the bill I must to prison go? Oh, never! I first die!" she cried wildly.

And then before I could lift a hand to stop her the distracted signora rushed toward the long pier not far away.

She was half way down the pier, and in a second more would have flung herself under the chains, when a tall man sprang like a phantom around an angle of the walk.

"Great heavens! What did you mean to do?" the long-limbed, wiry-built young man exclaimed, as he seized her and whirled the flying figure toward him.

If he had struck her the girl could not have shrunk from him with more affright. She made one distracted movement to release herself from his arms, and then dropped limp and fainting upon the pier.

Ackley, in his surprise at meeting the signora there, and in his dismay at her frantic action, had neither seen nor heard me.

I was almost beside him when he stooped to lift her to her feet.

As he did so a handkerchief fell from his breast pocket. It was a square of dull pink silk with a dull green dragon in the center; it had never been unfolded, and I conjectured—quite correctly too as was afterwards proved—that it was one of a half dozen which he had managed to get into his burglarious clutches. Anyhow, I knew I was pretty safe in taking him into custody then and there.

Before he fairly realized that I was beside him, I had tripped him scientifically and snapped a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

And now that he was fairly caught he admitted the present damaging charge against him.

"I wouldn't want a woman blamed on my account," he said, in reference to the Signor Vestrella.

It seemed the girl's stepfather was an American, and Alvan Ackley was his son. Ackley had conceived a passionate attachment for the girl. In his letters to her he had represented himself as being connected with a theatrical agency.

By promising her lucrative engagements, he had induced her to cross the Atlantic. Once here she had begun to distrust him, but she was compelled to accept his assistance.

Her entire innocence was clearly established, but she never went back to the stage. Very soon after the events just narrated she became the wife of Stanton Grame, who recovered the bulk of the stolen money.

The stolen silverware was also traced and restored intact to the owners.

THE LAST MAN

Or, The House at the End of the Block

A Serial Detective Story

By POLICE SERGEANT MALLORY

CHAPTER SIX

THE BOX IS RECOVERED AND THEN LOST.

Here was just such an arm as he had seen on that terrible night! Could this creature have any connection with this affair? It did not seem possible, but Barney was destined to be soon undeceived in this regard, and to find that it was not only possible, but that it was so.

"Go away!" said the hunchback, jumping about over the floor, slinging his long arms as he went; "go away, Miss Crissy, and ask me no questions, for I don't know what has become of him no more than you do."

"But, Mat, you delivered him the letter that called him away!" cried the young girl, stamping her foot imperiously. "You are the last person who saw Harry Bainbridge, and I demand of you to tell me what has become of him."

The deformed man made no answer, save the unmeaning, chattering sound which had first attracted Barney's attention, but jumped about the room like an enraged animal, swinging his arms in every direction as he went.

"Stand still, Mat!" cried the girl, who was evidently greatly agitated; "stand still, and have some wit about you, if you can, and answer my question at once."

"I won't!" cried the dwarf; "I won't answer it at all! And if you don't get out of my lodge, and leave me alone, I'll eat you up!"

"No threats, you miserable brute!" replied the girl, with dignity. "I shall appeal to Mr. Lombard to have you removed from the gate-keeper's position at once; for since he brought you back from the West your conduct has been outrageous."

The girl turned, and leaving the gate-house, walked slowly up the graveled walk to the mansion beyond.

Her last remark seemed to anger the dwarf more than anything she had said before, and he continued his wild motions with greater energy, chattering and muttering as he rushed about the room.

Suddenly his right arm came in contact with a shelf above his head, over which a curtain was drawn, and as it did so, there dropped from behind the curtain an object which struck heavily upon the floor.

The eyes of Barney Nudd became twice their natural size. And well they might, for the object which fell from behind that curtain to the gate-house floor was none other than the tin box belonging to the dead Christopher Lombard which he had himself seen so mysteriously stolen away.

But that happened in Nevada—could it now be here before him in this little stone house back of Excelsior Grove?

Barney Nudd did not stop to reason on the probabilities

of the case one moment; a door stood beside the window into which he looked, and he had without the delay of an instant burst it open, and dashed into the room.

"Give me that box, ye thaving spalpeen!" he cried, throwing himself upon the dwarf, who, having picked it up, was about to restore it to its place on the shelf, "give me that box or I'll break every crooked bone in yer ugly body!"

At the sight of the intruder, the deformed uttered a loud yell, and tried to tear himself and the box away, but the ex-miner was as strong as an ox, and felled him with one blow of his fist.

"Lie there, yer skinny ape!" he cried, "ye're as ugly as the boggy of Ballymarra woods, so yer are, but I have me dead frind's box, and ye can go to purgatory for all I care!"

The dwarf made no effort to rise or even speak, but lay where Barney's powerful right arm had sent him, while that pugilistic individual strode out of the cabin with his prize securely tucked under his arm.

A more intelligent man would have waited and endeavored to learn from this strange creature's name part of what he knew, but the trusty Irishman cared only for his precious box, and to get it to Joseph Wells in safety, and he hurried down the road in the direction of the picnic prove in which the P. J. Dolan Association were sporting themselves with his countenance beaming with excitement and pleasure. The distance was considerable, for he had walked for an hour before reaching the place of his singular adventure, and becoming somewhat weary with his long tramp, the steps of Barney Nudd at length began to flag.

He had not looked behind him, since he recovered his treasure, or he might have observed the apelike figure of the dwarf cautiously following him.

Running half with his legs, half with his arms, dodging behind fences, hiding behind trees, this singular individual kept close behind the Irishman, who never suspected his presence for a moment. Becoming more and more fatigued with his long tramp, Barney, having arrived at a large tree which overhung a road-side spring, sat down under the shadow of its branches to rest.

He took out his great red handkerchief, and mopped the perspiration from his head, the box resting in his lap meanwhile.

Silently the dwarf crept up behind him. He seemed to possess the power of putting his feet to the ground without making a sound. With equal quiet and the skill of a monkey, he swung himself into the tree, and creeping out upon the branch under which the man was seated, gazed down upon him with an air of malignant hatred.

Barney Nudd was totally unconscious of his presence, when the singular creature suddenly wound his stumpy legs around the limb, and letting his whole body hang

down, thrust his long arms directly into the unconscious Irishman's lap.

With one great hand he struck Barney a stinging blow in the face, while the other seized the tin box, and then with an effort which would have done credit to a trapeze performer, he swung himself back into the tree and scampered away up among the branches like the ape he so closely resembled. Jumping to his feet, Barney Nudd rubbed his bruised face, and looked after the retreating form in wonder and surprise.

"By the powers!" he exclaimed, "he's a smart one, but he's not got the best of Barney Nudd yet!"

Then, for a man of his race and temperament, and in consideration of the importance of the occasion, Barney Nudd did a very singular thing.

He simply snapped his fingers at the form of the dwarf in the tree, and turning on his heel, walked away.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

JOSEPH WELLS ENTERS THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

At a little past eight o'clock on the evening of the day upon which the P. J. Dolan Association gave their annual picnic at Excelsior Grove, had any interested persons been watching the mysterious little house at the end of the block, they might have observed the silent custodian, Mr. Tanningham, briskly descending the steps with a large market-basket on his arm.

There was something about the movement and general air of the man quite different from his usual appearance.

Ordinarily Mr. Tanningham moved slowly and sedately, as though time were a matter of utter indifference to him, and from his countenance, the presence of no inward emotion could be suspected even for a moment. To-night it was altogether different.

The custodian of the mysterious house moved like a man with business on hand, and the expression of his face indicated a most lively interest in something, whatever that something might be.

Shifting the market basket from the right arm to the left, Mr. Tanningham walked briskly down the street.

The change in the old man's appearance was noticed by one person—a young man who was intently watching him behind the security of a neighboring window-blind directly opposite, in fact, in the upper story of Mrs. Susan Doney's respectable domicile, which offered accommodations to reputable single gentlemen.

It is unnecessary to say that the observer was Detective Joseph Wells. All day long he had watched the mysterious house, as he had done for several days before. At first he discovered nothing, but to-day there had been a wonderful change.

It is true the house had not been a whit the less tightly closed, nor until now had a soul passed in or out of its doors. Nevertheless, Mr. Tanningham had received visitors by the score. The baker had called, and delivered a large supply of bread—enough for a regiment, at least.

The butcher had come at half-past nine in the morning and left quantities of beef-steak, choice rib-roasts, mutton, poultry, and lamb.

The grocer had called still earlier in the day, with stores of all kinds in his line, and an hour later a spruce-looking wagon had driven up, and handed out at the door three baskets of champagne—Pommery Sec., Piper Heidsieck, and Mum's Extra Dry—together with various other varieties of liquor, and a number of bottles of Bass' Bitter Beer.

Nor was this all; for just at night the confectioner had appeared with a large freezer of ice-cream, and the florist with several magnificently-arranged dinner-pieces of flowers.

What did it all mean? That they were about to have a dinner-party in the house at the end of the block was something entirely clear; and yet the shades of evening fell, and never a guest appeared.

These preparations seemed to perplex Joseph Wells to the last degree.

"Confound it!" he muttered to himself, "that old Cerebus can't be going to eat those things all by himself, that's certain—there is going to be a dinner in that house to-night, and, as sure as my name is Wells, so sure will I be there to see."

The man had become intensely interested in this affair. The more he thought of it, the more mysterious it all seemed.

He instinctively felt, though he would have found it hard to tell why, that there was some connection between the affair of the Nevada hills, the skeleton of the dead miner which he held in trust, and the mysterious house before him.

Probably the startling resemblance between the stranger he had seen come out of its door and the miner who had died in his arms had much to do with the feeling.

To watch this house was part of his duty now, for here had last been seen the boy whose disappearance Joseph Wells had been employed to solve.

He had not a doubt that the boy was dead, for on his visit to the house he had not seen the first trace of his presence. He was unquestionably dead, and his body had been disposed of, but who were the guilty ones? That was the question.

The going of the old custodian seemed to afford the detective the very opportunity which he sought.

Not a soul had entered the house that day—of this he was ready to swear. He had his false key carefully modeled from his wax impressions of the lock, and he determined to steal into the house and conceal himself, and see what transpired. Now this was an exceedingly risky thing to do, and no one realized this better than Joseph Wells. All that he knew of this house did not lead him to believe that if he was caught spying within the walls his life would be worth two cents.

The man was an expert at his business, however, and personal risk did not weigh with him for an instant.

Mr. Tanningham was out; now was his time. To-night the mystery might be solved.

Heavily arming himself, the detective softly stole down stairs, wishing to attract the attention of no one.

He sauntered up the street on the side of the way on which Mrs. Doney's house was situated, and when out of sight of the house, crossed, and returning, gained the doorway of the house at the end of the block without having been observed.

Without a moment's hesitation he slipped his key in the lock, opened and shut the door.

He stood within the mysterious house. The hallway was dark as pitch. Joseph Wells stopped and listened. There was not a sound to be heard.

A sensation of fear crept over him—he felt his heart beat quicker, and the perspiration sprang to his brow.

It was but for an instant, however, for he shook himself with an effort, and drove these sensations away.

"Come, come, Joe Wells," he said to himself, "you've gone too far to back out now; bust ahead, and win the day!"

He crept softly through the hall, his feet purposely prepared, making no sound upon the carpet. He had observed the arrangement of the house during his previous visit, and especially that of this floor.

The first door from the hall led into a large parlor, back of which was a library, and back of this again, and occupying the whole width of the house and connecting by a door directly with the hall, was a large dining-room.

Joseph Wells tried the parlor door. It opened and he entered. In this room all was entirely dark.

Creeping softly along, and listening to every sound, the detective passed into the library beyond.

One feeble gas-jet served to partially illuminate this room. It was empty, as had been the parlor which he had left a moment before.

Here Joseph Wells paused to take a survey of the room. It was handsomely furnished, but the round mahogany table, ungainly hair-cloth sofa, and chairs covered with the same material, indicated the style of long ago.

A few pictures hung on the wall—cheap oil-paintings and engravings of no especial merit, while a book-case, with a liberal supply of books, occupied one entire side of the room.

There was nothing to indicate that guests were expected here. Suddenly the detective observed, however, a peculiar frame hanging against the wall in a remote corner of the room, which attracted his attention at once.

The frame was one of heavy gilt, and inclosed thirteen small but neatly executed oval portraits in oil, representing thirteen young men.

Over the frame was hung a wreath of freshly-cut flowers.

Joseph Wells drew closer, and by the feeble light saw engrossed over the portraits

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THIRTEEN.

What was this?

Some dead and gone society of the past?

Under each portrait was a name.

The detective silently read them, as follows:

"William Flemming, David B. Fletcher, John J. Fox, Nathaniel Gale, George S. Marshall, Horace V. Pratt, Stillman K. Roberts, Elijah Russell, Samuel A. Wentworth, Peter Butler, Felix St. Cocur, Oliver Knowles, Christopher Lombard."

Christopher Lombard!

Here, then, was a clew at last.

The dead miner had then been a member of this mysterious "Brotherhood of Thirteen." But what was this society? This was more than Joseph Wells could tell.

The countenances of the men, as represented in the portraits, were all young, Christopher Lombard's as young as the rest, and as the man who had died in Joseph Wells's arms in the hut at the head of Crooked Canyon had been well advanced in life, these portraits must necessarily have been the work of many years ago. It was all a mystery, and leaving the portraits, the detective moved on toward the dining-room door. He tried the knob—it was locked.

He passed out into the hall again and tried the door leading from there. This was also securely fastened.

Now, Joseph Wells had entered this room on his previous visit, and had observed nothing peculiar. He therefore turned away from the door, and was about to ascend the stairs and explore the rooms above, when he suddenly heard a sound which made him change his plans in a hurry.

It was the sound of a key thrust quickly into the lock of the outer door.

Was Mr. Tanningham returning, or was some other person about to enter the mysterious house?

He must seek an immediate hiding-place in either case.

He had observed, while in the library, a large closet opening out of the room on the side toward the dining-room, and he resolved to conceal himself there.

He shot quickly into the library, and had hardly time to gain the closet when he heard the outer door open and shut. Footsteps trod the length of the hall and passed down the basement stairs.

Joseph Wells breathed more freely.

Suddenly another key could be heard thrusting itself into the latch, the outer door was again closed, and a heavy step entered the library. The detective's heart stood still.

If he was discovered what would be his fate?

Would he also be murdered in cold blood, like the youth of a few nights ago?

Joseph Wells mechanically grasped his pistols—at all events he would sell his life dearly. Placing his eyes to the key-hole of the closet door, he surveyed the new-comer by the aid of the feeble light.

It needed but a glance for him to recognize the new-comer for to all appearance the dead Christopher Lombard stood before him, or if not he, at least this mysterious double whom the detective had seen enter the hack.

The man threw aside his hat and a great-coat which, in spite of the heat, he wore, with the evident intention of disguising his form, and paced uneasily up and down the floor.

"At last," he muttered, "my time is near at hand. I must enact this farce but once more and the great wealth of the Tontine is mine!"

The wealth of the Tontine? What was that?

The detective could not imagine, nor did further remark from the man before him bring enlightenment, for, striding to the door, he flung it open, and called loudly three times; "Tanny! Tanny! Tanny!"

Tanny! The name Christopher Lombard had uttered with his dying breath.

Fate had, indeed, favored Joseph Wells—he might be able to execute his oath after all.

He longed for the tin box; but for its unfortunate loss all this mystery would be as plain as day.

Slow, measured steps were heard approaching from below, and Mr. Tanningham appeared, bearing in his hand a silver candlestick in which burned a long wax candle. He had returned—entering by another door.

He bent his gray head low before his visitor as he entered.

"Master of the Tontine," he said, "all is ready."

"Good, Tanny," replied the other; "if all is ready, then lead on."

The sound of the unlocking of a door was heard, and Joseph Wells knew that the two men had passed into the dining-room.

How he wished he could see what was transpiring in that room! But he dared not leave his hiding-place even for a moment.

Suddenly a brilliant light seemed to illuminate the place behind the closet-wall.

The detective looked up in astonishment, and saw that there was at one end of the closet a sliding panel communicating with the room beyond.

The closet had evidently been intended for china or silver, and this slide was intended to pass these articles to the dining-room without going around by the door.

The light shone brightly through the joints of the panel. Evidently the diningroom was brilliantly illuminated.

He could hear steps moving about the room, and he determined to defer opening the panel until this should have ceased.

It certainly appeared that a dinner was about to be given, and if this was the case, when the guests arrived and were occupied with the feast the detective felt that he should be able to see and hear everything unobserved.

But the guests did not come. Moment after moment elapsed, and there was no ring at the bell—no one entered the door.

If there was then to be a feast in the house at the end of the block, Mr. Tanningham and his solitary visitor were evidently to eat it alone.

The sound of the pouring of wine was now distinctly audible, mingled with the rattling of dishes and the jingling of glassware. Could the feast already have begun?

Joseph Wells could stand it no longer. He must see what was going on in that room, whether he was detected or not. Holding his breath, and without the slightest sound, he softly drew back the panel an infinitesimal fraction of an inch, and applied his eye to the opening thus gained.

Great heavens! what manner of feast is this? It was a veritable dinner of death!

Down the center of the apartment ran a long table, fairly groaning beneath viands of every sort. Great haunches of beef at the head, saddles of mutton at the foot, with poultry and vegetables of twenty sorts lining either side. Sparkling wine gleamed from crystal goblets, great pyramids of flowers were at every hand—but the guests? They had one and all been visited by the hand of death!

At the head of the table sat the man whose startling resemblance to Christopher Lombard shone out more clearly than ever. Behind him stood the imperturbable Mr. Tanningham, dressed as a waiter of forty years ago, with a white shirt-bosom of immense expanse, a stock, and high standing collar, bearing over his arm a large white napkin as an insignia of his office.

The man at the head of the table was also in full dress of many years ago, but he and the old servant at the back of his chair were the only living beings in the room.

The feast was spread, and the covers were laid for just thirteen. There were six on one side and six on the other, with the mysterious stranger in the center. He at the head of the table was certainly a man of flesh and blood. The guests at the sides possessed neither the one nor the other. They were simply skeletons—things of bone alone!

Yes, twelve articulated skeletons! all seated around the table; plates loaded with every viand stood before them, glasses filled with the choicest wines. What mockery was this?

Joseph Wells was lost in wonder and surprise, yet he instinctively felt that he knew where Christopher Lombard's skeleton was to be delivered now.

He had no time for thought, for the man at the head of the table slowly rose to his feet and surveyed his bony guests, Mr. Tanningham standing with his napkin over his arm meekly in the rear.

"Brethren of the Thirteen," said the man, slowly addressing the bony forms on either hand, "companions of the Tontine of 1840, we are assembled together once more."

He paused, but it is unnecessary to say there was no reply.

"This is to be our last dinner," continued the speaker; "at our next meeting, which will take place on July 18th, the purposes of our organization will be fulfilled."

Another pause. Still the dead guests made no sound.

"Brethren of the Thirteen," cried the man, still address-

ing the skeletons as though they were living beings, "let us drink to the health of the Last Man."

He seized a goblet overflowing with sparkling wine, and raised it to his lips. "To the health of the Last Man," he cried again.

"To the health of the Last Man" seemed to be echoed around the room, and to the detective's surprise and astonishment every skeleton rose, and seizing each his glass in one bony hand, all turned their eyeless skulls toward their leader, at the head of the table, and raising each his glass to his bony lips, to all appearance drank to the health of the Last Man.

At a sight so weird and so startling, Joseph Wells was unable to prevent a slight exclamation of surprise. He involuntarily opened the panel wider to get a better glimpse of what was going on in the room. His imprudence finished all in an instant.

The man at the head of the table dashed his glass to the floor; the skeleton guests sank back with rattling bones in their chairs.

"Eavesdroppers, Tanny!" cried the man—"spies! There is some one in the library closet, I am sure!"

Both he and the old custodian of the house sprang for the library door.

Joseph Wells did not wait for them to come upon him. He bitterly regretted his imprudence, which was like to cost him dear. He dashed out of the closet into the library, and made for the hallway beyond. To attempt to gain the outer door he knew would be simple folly—he must hide somewhere, if to hide in that house were possible.

Hardly stopping to think which way he went, he rushed down the basement-stairs, his muffled feet giving out no sound as he went, and gained the floor below. Here he spied a door leading apparently into the cellar.

His pursuers had not heard him, thanks to his precaution to prepare his feet for such work in advance, and he could distinctly hear them running around on the floor above. He felt that the cellar was his strongest hold—he could hide there until chance offered him an avenue of escape.

Opening the door, he softly stole down the cellar-stairs. He did not dare to strike a light, and was just groping his way cautiously along, when a singular sound fell upon his ear. It was a creaking, grating sound, like the opening of a heavy door.

At the same instant the detective saw what seemed to be one corner of the ceiling of the cellar in which he found himself descending before his astonished eyes.

It was an immense flagstone, and as it slowly came lower and lower, Joseph Wells saw that it bore crouched on its surface the hideously deformed figure of a dwarfish man. A dwarf with astonishingly long arms and great red hands was seated upon the stone. In those hands this singular being held tightly grasped the much desired stolen tin box.

(To be continued)

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THE MYSTERY OF HYPNOTISM

By LEO HUGO KOCH, A.C.S.

PART II

WHAT IS "SELF"?

HAVE you ever, either verbally or mentally, "talked to yourself" or heard other people doing so? You must have done so often enough. What, then, is this "self" to which we communicate our thoughts and reason and argue with as if it were a separate entity?

Probably you will reply that it is the "brain" to which we address ourselves; but the brain, we are told, is merely a mass of grayish, nervous matter; therefore, there must be some phase of our existence which is apart and distinct from the ordinary personality of the body, a phase which we can neither clearly understand nor properly explain, but which we call—for want of a better name—the "subjective mind."

MEMORY

Have you ever wanted to recall to mind the name of a particular person, place or thing, or even a number, only to find that it has escaped your memory entirely, just when you wanted it, and the more you try to think of it the farther it seems away, until eventually you give it up as a bad job? When, lo!—just when you were not thinking about it—it suddenly dawns upon you, and you probably say to yourself, "How silly of me not to have thought of that before!"

The "subjective" mind has communicated that word to the "objective" mind, which, a moment before, had been unable to recall it.

A SIMPLE EXPERIMENT

Here is a simple experiment that will serve to illustrate the existence of the dual mind: Take in your hand a pen or pencil and closing your eyes write upon a piece of paper, as quickly as possible without stopping, the word, say, "Commencement." In doing so you will observe that something seems to tell you that you have not written the word correctly and that too many strokes have been used in forming the m's or other letters in that word, and yet, upon opening your eyes you will find that, contrary to your expectations, the word has been written exactly correct.

DO YOU EVER DREAM?

Nearly every person at some period in their lives have dreamed some peculiar dreams. Sometimes, if you stop to consider, the foundation for these dreams can be traced to some occurrence that has taken place during the day or on some previous occasion. Probably something that you have read, seen, done or heard, has impressed itself upon the "subjective" or sleeping mind, and which, during the natural sleep, is responsible for your dream, although in your working or objective state you may have forgotten the occurrence.

SOME EVERY-DAY EXAMPLES OF HYPNOTISM

Every man or woman unconsciously uses hypnotism to a more or less degree in every-day life. You have seen a mother as she rocks her child to sleep in the cradle, or

walks to and fro about the room with it in her arms, at the same time singing lullabys to it in a low voice, or hushes it to sleep as she rocks it backward and forward in a rocking chair. That mother is using, unconsciously, a strong, hypnotic power over her offspring, who, controlled by the soothing and harmless influence, is soon sleeping soundly in the land of childish dreams.

Have you ever been walking down the street and stopped to look in a shop window at something that has attracted your eye and which you have probably made up your mind to buy? Entering the shop you step up to the counter and ask the obliging clerk or proprietor to show you the special article, which he does, and you have almost decided to take it, but at that moment he produces another similar article, which he suggests to you is much better in some respects than the one you originally intended to purchase (a little more expensive, perhaps, but that is a mere detail), or probably he introduces a different article to you altogether, and he sounds the praises of that article to such an extent that finally you leave the shop, not with the article you went in to purchase, but the one he has influenced you to buy by his power of suggestion. This is an example of the law of suggestion on a small scale, which is used by the professional hypnotist in controlling his subjects.

SUGGESTIVE THERAPEUTICS

is another branch of Hypnotism which is usually employed by doctors in conjunction with material remedies used in the medical profession. Various diseases can be cured by the aid of suggestion, and many seemingly wonderful recoveries by its aid are recorded.

Sydney Hower, LL.D., in his book entitled "Hypnotism Up-to-Date," says:

"It has been said that hypnotic suggestion is an imaginary cure for an imaginary disease, but this contention in the light of abundant proof at hand to the contrary, is as foolish as the claim of the enthusiast that every disease, hysterical or organic, must absolutely yield to hypnotic treatment, upon the temperament of the patient, the efficacy of the means employed for his restoration to health depends, but it must not be forgotten that while hypnotism alone may not be able to effect a cure, hypnotism and medicine together, or, in other words, psychical and material remedies conjoined, form the most powerful weapon of attack."

Among the diseases that are susceptible to hypnotic suggestion may be mentioned headache, earache, toothache, neuralgia, hysteria, or all forms of imaginary ailments or disease; also alcoholism, cocaine, cigarette and morphine habits, sciatica, rheumatism, paralysis, stammering, nervous debility, etc., etc.

There are several Sanitariums in America, France, etc., where Suggestive Therapeutics and psychic treatment are solely employed.

The number of wonderful cures effected by the use of hypnotism are truly remarkable, and in the hands of responsible people, such as doctors, surgeons, dentists, nurses, etc., it would prove of untold benefit.

The Rev. Father Morrissey, a Roman Catholic priest, who resides in the little township of Bartibogue, New Brunswick, Can., has performed some wonderful cures by psychic means, and he is said to have a large barn full of sticks and crutches, etc., left there by the halt and the lame who have been cured, for which he has never charged a cent. He refuses all offers of reward.

The Hindus are more advanced in the Hypnotic and Occult science than are European races, and they have been known to effect marvelous cures by its aid. The science is also not unknown to the Zulus, and it is said to have been practiced by certain tribes of Indians living in Canada, the power of curing disease by its aid being usually confined to the medicine man of the particular tribe.

SOME CURIOUS FACTS CONCERNING HYPNOTISM

The following are some curious facts which have been taken from various newspapers, etc., recording the remarkable things capable of being performed by means of Hypnotism, and are here given to convince the reader of its peculiar power.

The article given below appeared in a New York paper dated June 16, 1899. The boy mentioned was stated to possess clairvoyant powers almost equal to the X-Rays, and in some instances even greater. He could see the workings of the brain and nerves, and distinguish clearly the outlines of every muscle and bone in the body of another:

"Boston, Mass., June 15.—Dr. Frank Brett, of South Braintree, Mass., has leaped far beyond the established limits of hypnotic science in experiments with his eleven-year-old son, Alfey.

"The father is a physician whose practice and his connection with one or two Boston hospitals satisfy his ambition and provide a comfortable living for his family. The son, one of two, eleven years old, is a handsome boy, with all the normal, boyish, happy instincts.

"This boy, aided by his father, has performed feats which have astonished the eminent physicians connected with Harvard Medical College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of this city. The boy, under hypnosis, develops powers of clairvoyance more startling than any other yet revealed, and more absorbing to scientific men because brought out under conditions which admit of not the slightest shadow of doubt as to their freedom from any taint of charlatanism."

"John Kneeland, of West Medford, suffering greatly from chronic lumbago and attendant ailments, went to the Emergency in search of relief. Dr. George Van Buehler told him the only thing to do for him would be to sear, with a white-hot iron, the nerves on his spinal column.

"Kneeland refused absolutely to take ether. Dr. Van Buehler said he would not attempt the operation without administering an anæsthetic.

"A. E. Nelson, a Boston young man who went to Cuba as a nurse during the Spanish war, happened to be in the operating room. He was asked to hypnotize Kneeland. The patient was anxious to have the experiment tried.

"Nelson stepped in front of Kneeland and, in the usual way, demonstrated his power over him. When it was clear that Kneeland was completely under his influence the hypnotist gave a signal to Dr. Van Buehler's assistant, and the searing iron was put in alcohol flames to heat.

"The hypnotist said to Kneeland: 'Now I am going to have Dr. Van Buehler examine you. He will run his finger over the nerves along your backbone, but it won't hurt you a bit.'

"Kneeland was turned on his face and Dr. Van Buehler

ran the white-hot iron across the delicate nerves, searing them deeply, while Nelson chatted with the patient. The scent of the burning flesh and the nerves filled the room, but the patient didn't notice it. His wounds were dressed and he sat up. Then Nelson stepped in front of him, snapped his fingers, and he returned to his normal condition.

"He was told that the operation had been performed, but he refused to believe it, and did not until the dressings were taken off and he was shown his back in a mirror. He said then that his back smarted somewhat, but declared that he had not felt any pain whatever."

"Chicago, Ill., December 14.—For forty-two minutes Mrs. M. F. Stewart lay in a hypnotic state yesterday on the operating table in a hospital in Ewing place, and without experiencing a pain was conscious that an operation was being performed upon her. She was placed on the table at 3:15 o'clock, and within three minutes she was in a hypnotic state. Her pulse ran from 72 to 114, and her temperature was raised and lowered. Insensible to pain she showed her sensibility to heat and cold. The moment she felt the hot water touch her body she complained that it was too hot. Such proved to be the case.

"After the operation Mrs. Stewart tried to describe her feelings. She said she felt the hypnotic influence come over her and the fear that she would suffer pass away. As she saw the knife cut into her flesh she said there was a peculiar sensation, not unlike a tickling feeling. What seemed most strange to her was the sewing with the peculiarly shaped needle. She felt it pierce her flesh and the stitches being made, but could not keep her mind on it long enough to come to any conclusion."

A REMARKABLE STATEMENT

The following report of a peculiar nature recently appeared in all the American newspapers:

"A Boston man, named Louis Terry, was taken to the State Hospital of Binghamton, N. Y., because of a remarkable ailment.

"He asserts that he was hypnotized by a man with whom he was traveling and who was a professional hypnotist, but with whom he quarreled over money matters, and who, for revenge, doomed him to stand up perpetually.

"When taken to the county hospital an effort was made to compel him to lie down, but it caused him such distress that it was abandoned, and for a week he has been standing continuously, sleeping while standing in a corner leaning against the wall. He can neither lie down nor sit down."

The above case is probably the result of an ordinary attack of catalepsy, and the patient may have been suffering from what is usually termed a "cataleptic fit" and which has been erroneously ascribed by the newspapers to the power of Hypnotism. Whether the professional hypnotist mentioned was responsible for the man's condition is open to doubt, inasmuch as it is claimed by several well-known authorities on the subject that a suggestion must be periodically planted in the subject's mind in order to take effect; and in order to do this the subject would have to be continuously hypnotized at certain periods.

I might here add that sensational stories published in various newspapers at different times, telling of crimes, etc., supposed to have been committed under hypnotic influence, have, on investigation, been proved by hypnotic experts to be utterly impossible and altogether against the principles of the science, and were probably ascribed to hypnotism by some "energetic" (?) reporter in search of "copy."

(To be continued)

THE SCIENCE OF FORTUNE-TELLING

PART II

MENSALIS; or, THE TABLE LINE

THIS is also called the line of fortune; it is termed likewise the mensa, because it makes up the table of the hand; which said line, when it is long enough, and without incisures, argues a due strength in the principal members of man, and also constancy; the contrary if it be short, crooked, cut or parted.

If it terminate under the mount of Saturn, it shows a vain, lying fellow.

If projecting small branches to the mount of Jupiter, it promises honors.

If there it be naked and simple, it is a sign of poverty and want.

If cutting the mount of Jupiter, cruelty of mind and disposition, with excessive wrath.

If it projects a breach between the fore and middle finger in a gentleman, it threateneth a wound in his head; in a lady, danger in child-bearing.

Three lines ascending directly upwards from this line, viz., one to the space between the middle and forefinger, a second to the space between the middle and ring finger, and a third to the space between the ring and the little finger, argues a contentious person in many respects.

A little line drawn to the interval or space between the middle finger and the ring finger, sorrow or labor.

If annexed to the natural mean, so that it makes an acute angle, it bringeth sorrow and labor.

If the natural mean be wanting, and the thoral annexed to the vital, it threatens decollation, or a deadly wound.

If no mensa at all, it shows a man malevolent, contentious, faithless, inconstant, and of base condition.

Confused little lines in the mensa, denote sickness; if under Mercury, in the former part of the age; under the sun, in the prime thereof; under the middle finger, in old age.

The Linea Hepataria or Liver-Line, is so called because, in a mysterious way, it is in rapport with the liver, and, by consequence, receives the latest intelligence respecting the health and temperament of the individual. When the Liver-Line is very long, and, traversing the Natural, and the Mensal, terminates in the Mons Saturni, it is a sign of consumption.

Still less important in its indications is the Linea Saturnalis. Its chief use and object would seem to be to supply the shortcomings of the Line of Life. But when it is very long, it is a sign of a life of hardships; so that, all things considered, it is desirable that it should terminate between the Natural and the Mensal.

Again, when the Natural is joined at its commencement with the Mensal—a rare occurrence—it is a sign of mental extravagance or folly; but when it is joined for any distance, the consequences are still more dreadful, for in this case it is almost invariably an indication of impiety. When, however, the Natural is curved away from the Mensal, it is a sign of probity; whilst, en revanche, if it be distorted and prolonged into the Mons Veneris, it is an infallible mark of an unprincipled and brutal disposition.

It is in connection with the Natural that a few words respecting the Quadrangle of the hand are most appropriate. This is that oblong space which lies, or should lie, between the Natural and the Mensal. The more truly oblong this is, the better for the individual; for it indicates that man of rectitude whom the ancient philosopher described as "four-square," and who in the tenderer parlance of popular modern ethics, is, by an analogous metaphor, usually spoken of as "a regular brick."

Whole treatises might be written respecting this one line alone, but it will suffice for the present to mention one other of its main uses and that is the information it

imparts respecting the day and month of birth. If people are further interested in knowing whether the individual with whom they may be conversing was born by day or night, they have only to study generally the lines of both his hands; for if those on the right hand are most clearly traced, he takes after his father, and was born by day; if those on the left, he takes after his mother, and was born by night. To ascertain the month and day, it is necessary to remember that, for chiromantic purposes, there are but seven planets which between them preside in such a way as to afford a certain amount of territory to each of these heavenly potentates. They and the months over which they rule are as follows:

The Moon—January. Jupiter—February; November. Mars—March; October. Venus—April; September. Mercury—May; August. Saturn—June; December. The Sun—July.

Having got thus far, we divide these months into two half-years; and (2) that if we discover in which of them it ruary, March, April; May, July and December; the second the other six. Now it stands to reason (1) that every one, if born at all, must have been born in one of these half years; and (2) that if we discover in which of them it was, we reduce the trouble of finding out the month by precisely one-half. Now, happily, nothing in the world is so easy, with a little natural shrewdness and a good deal of experience, as to discover the half-year of an individual's birth; for, if the Natural is well formed, completely marked, and not livid, then there remains no reasonable doubt that the individual in question was born in the first of the half-years as above divided; but if, on comparing the Natural with the other lines, it appears badly formed, pale and indistinctly traced, then the birth must be sought in one of the other six months. So far the operation is one of amazing simplicity and certitude. Neither is it at all more difficult to proceed to the next step and discover the exact month; for since the Natural in every part of its course is under the domination of some one or other of the planets, and we already know what month or months each is held to govern, we have but to scan the Natural carefully, and, noting the first solution of its continuity from the point where it starts between the finger and thumb, observe in the region of which planet it occurs, to know at once the month in which the individual was born. But having learned this, we have already learned something more; for, by a beautiful provision of nature, which saves the Chiromantist an incalculable amount of trouble, the month very often indicates also the day of the week on which the birth took place. Thus, there is always a strong presumption that if a person be born in March or October he will be born on Tuesday; in May or August, on a Wednesday; in February or November, on a Thursday; in April or September, on a Friday; in June or December, on a Saturday; January, on a Monday; in July, on a Sunday. An instance of this method of discovering the month of the individual's birth may not be without a practical value. Thus, A has the Natural, compared with the other lines, faint and livid; he was born, therefore, in the second half-year, i. e., in one of the months of January, June, August, September, October or November. You examine the Natural more closely, and find, for example, that its first clearly marked division occurs near the commencement under the base of the index finger, this is under the dominion of Jupiter. Now Jupiter presides over the months of February and November; but February is already excluded as belonging to the first half-year; there remains, therefore, only November. A was therefore born in November; and there is further a presumption in favor of its having occurred on a Thursday in that month.

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

MAGELLAN STRAITS HARD HIT.

Since the opening of the Panama Canal the Straits of Magellan are almost deserted. An official Chilean report states that only ninety-nine vessels called at Punta Arenas in 1918, against 476 in 1912.

SHOULD HAVE MUSICAL EARS.

Nucie, a monkey at the California Land Show at San Francisco, escaped from her cage, disappeared in the recesses of the great pipe organ in the municipal auditorium, which was played regularly night and day, and was found five days later in the bass clef of the organ with two little monkeys.

NEW MINERAL DISCOVERED.

A new mineral has been discovered in Siberia. The discovery was made by a hunter on the shore of Lake Balkash, and the mineral has been named Balkashite. It has the appearance of dark-brown rubber, and when ignited it burns with a strong flame, leaving about 2 per cent. ash. When placed in water it becomes a mass very much like paraffine.

WILL NOT CLAIM MONEY.

Mrs. Lydia DeNoon of Gardner, Me., heard some one in her chicken house a few nights ago. Going out to investigate, she found two hens missing. The next morning she found on the chicken house floor a \$10 bill. The thief evidently had pulled a string out of his pocket with which to tie the sack, and with it came the \$10. The thief will hardly call and claim his property.

FISHING WITH AXES.

Fishing with axes is a "sport" in Illinois now. In the ponds and lakes around Edwardsville, Ill., the fish come up close to the frigid coating to get air. They may be seen through the clear ice. The "hunter" strikes the ice just above the fish, which is stunned by the concussion. A hole is then chopped and the fish taken out. Numbers of fine catfish are obtained every day by this method.

STEEL PLIERS STOPPED HIM.

With the aid of steel pliers, Lawrence Dahman, a city foreman, captured James Ellington, a prisoner who escaped from the turnkey of the County Jail, Youngstown, O., when the turnkey slipped on some ice and fell. Ellington was running past No. 1 fire station when Dahman drew the pliers from his pocket. "Don't shoot," said the fugitive as he surrendered. Before he discovered he had been deceived he was turned over to the police.

RABBITS BRING WEALTH

Demands from Eastern concerns for unlimited quantities of rabbit pelts has revived a former industry in Northern Michigan. One concern notified commission men that it is in the market for 10,000,000 rabbit skins during the 1919-1920 season. Farmers' children in farming sections who have decided to fill small orders are sending their addresses to the Department of Agriculture, which

transmits such information to fur and pelt dealers. State and county officials are encouraging the killing of rabbits, which were numerous and destructive in agricultural districts this summer.

GIRLS GOT \$1,700 IN SUIT CASE.

Battered and dilapidated, a suit case was kicked around Rockefeller Park, Cleveland, O., all day. It was in every one's way, and every one who came along gave it a kick.

Then Bernice Drerer and Virginia Dtoe came along. Woman's curiosity led them to open it. There was some clothing and \$1,500 in Liberty Bonds and \$200 in cash.

Rev. L. D. Woodruff claimed it at Police Headquarters, having lost it from his automobile.

BUYS 17,000 COFFINS.

Contracts have been awarded by the Quartermaster General for 17,000 coffins for the return of bodies of American soldiers buried in Europe. They involve an expenditure of \$1,104,508. The coffins will be of the most durable material procurable, and deliveries expedited.

In making this announcement, the Quartermaster General also made public a communication from a committee of the Casket Manufacturers' Association of America, announcing the disapproval of that organization of the project for the general return of American dead from overseas.

PRETTY FACE CAUSES WRECK.

The Curtiss mail plane R-30, which dropped into a cluster of trees on the Swarthmore College, Pa., campus, is rapidly disappearing at the hands of souvenir hunters in spite of the efficient guarding of the local police department.

An eye witness to-day furnished an account of the mishap. According to his story, the pilot was flying low and waving to a group of co-eds. All went well, it is alleged, until he loosened his hold of the controlling rod for the purpose of throwing kisses with both hands. In an instant his plane dropped into the trees, and it was another case of a pretty face causing the downfall of man.

A CLERK'S MISTAKE.

Mrs. Perlle E. Lovett, wife of John W. Lovett, an attorney, of Anderson, Ind., received a letter the other day that her husband addressed to her while he was at Baltimore, Sept. 25, 1919. After virtually a tour of the world, it was delivered to the Lovett home here, and Mr. Lovett, without opening it, forwarded it to his wife, who is resting for a few days at a sanitarium at Martinsville.

Because a mail despatching clerk probably glanced hastily at the address, he interpreted "Indiana" as "India," and the letter was sent there. It was received at Bombay, Nov. 23, and the following day was stamped as a dead letter and was sent on a return trip.

It evidently passed through French provinces, for a 30 centime collect stamp had been added, but the letter apparently had not been opened.

LITTLE GIRL'S DREAM ENDS WITH A REWARD

Mary, eleven years of age, was the wealthiest little girl in Sharon, Pa., for just one week. Her dreams ended late one day when, questioned by police, she admitted that on Nov. 14 she had found a package containing \$4,270, the life savings of Mr. and Mrs. George Dzuruiak, which the woman lost, the money falling from an apron pocket.

The girl found the package a few minutes later, ran to her home, hid the bills in the cellar, and placed thirty-four gold pieces in an electric flash-light.

But a Sharon business man, who saw the girl pick up the package, told the police.

Mary, however, will receive a reward of \$200.

CURIOSITY LEADS TO SNAKES' DEATH.

One evening as John Gorham and Bill Winkle were walking along the construction camp of Lutes & Co., on the road repairs being made on the Lexington and Harrodsburg pike, near Brooklyn, Ky., they spied three large copperheads lying on the rocks near the den where several have been killed during the summer. Gorham and Winkle promptly killed the three copperheads, as a matter of public policy, and then went their way feeling they had done some good in the world. It is surmised that the gigantic blast, which recently shook the end of Mercer County, wrecked a cemetery, roused these snakes from their winter lethargy and at the same time roused their curiosity. They went out to see what was the matter, and thus became victims of their uncontrollable desire to find out what was going on in their neighborhood.

A DELICATE OPERATION.

Swallowing a toothpick resulted in two operations being performed on William Edwards, superintendent of the Amsterdam Building Company of No. 140 West 42d street, New York, and which for a time caused him serious trouble.

Nearly two months ago Mr. Edwards was taken suddenly ill. His case bore symptoms of acute appendicitis. He was removed from his home on Academy street to St. Francis Hospital, Trenton, N. J., where an operation was performed by Dr. Martin W. Reddan. It was found that peritonitis had developed, but the appendix appeared to be all right.

A short time later his condition became worse. Dr. Reddan operated again and found a toothpick Mr. Edwards had swallowed perforated his intestines. This piece of wood was removed after a delicate operation, and Mr. Edwards is now doing nicely.

FARM HANDS COMMAND \$100 A MONTH NOW.

The hundred-dollar-a-month hired man in Nebraska has arrived. A number of farmers who were in attendance at the annual gathering of agriculturists, Lincoln, Neb., said they had made contracts with reliable and competent men at that figures.

They said that it was necessary to do so for the reason that the supply of competent farm labor was limited, and they found it profitable to pay more if they got the kind of men wanted. Many of the farmhands have joined the I. W. W. in recent years, and others have gone to town, where they can get fifty cents an hour and have the movies right around the corner.

Fifteen years ago the average paid in the State ran from \$20 to \$25 a month. Later it rose to \$40, and during the war and last year, with the \$2 wheat guarantee in effect, \$75 and \$80 was paid. The increase of wages in the cities and towns is given as the reason for the necessity of paying \$100 a month to get the best men. These

speedily develop, because they are the best men, into renters, and then into farm owners.

A REMARKABLE CAT.

Dick, the prize tomcat owned by John R. Bradley, Palm Beach, Fla., was buried with ceremony. Dick was killed after a fight to a finish with a skunk. It was his first and only defeat in a score of combats, including two with prize bulldogs, which were routed by the sharp claws of the fighting feline.

The grave of Dick is on the property of the Beach Club. A suitable tombstone is sought with an inscription doing justice to his combative ability. He was probably one of the best known animals in the cat world. Hundreds of newspaper stories and pictures of him have been printed.

The first victory over a bulldog was one of Dick's greatest exploits. Mr. Bradley, seeing his pet decisively whip other cats and dogs, offered a wager that he could defeat a bulldog in a fair fight. Edward R. McLean took up the wager and lost. A second bulldog, "Newport Nipper," owned by the late Hamilton Cary, was also defeated.

Great surprise was evinced at the victory of the skunk. The cat's owner said that Dick must have had difficulty in breathing at the start of the combat, enabling the skunk to put over the finishing blow.

"SOLID" BICYCLE TIRES.

Old bicycle tires can be rendered puncture-proof by an extremely simple and inexpensive treatment. Scrap rubber of almost any description is cut into small pieces, none larger than one-half an inch square. A slit, about four inches long, is made in the tire on the side which fits on the rim, and while this is held open by a short length of stiff wire, the bits of rubber are forced through it into the casing, and pushed as far as possible away from the opening. The hole is then closed by tying a piece of string around the tire. Another slit is cut about 10 inches from the first, and the same operation performed again. This is continued until the entire casing is packed with the rubber chunks, when the strings holding the edges of the slits together are removed, and the tire placed on the wheel rim. After the bicycle is ridden a short distance more rubber can be placed in it. This makes it practically solid. It can then be cemented to the rim. A tire treated in this manner will not ride quite as easily as a pneumatic tire, but it protects the rim from injury at slight cost.

HOLD A MUMMY AND CAN'T LET GO.

An English mummy, to which the name of "Old Jimmy" has been irreverently given, is bothering the Rev. B. Saunders Lloyd, rector, and the wardens and vestrymen of the ancient City Church of St. James, London, behind the Mansion House Station. They have it on their hands and can get no trace of its origin or age, and they wish to dispose of it.

It first came to the attention of the church authorities in 1666, when the great fire of London, whose ruins covered 396 acres, consumed the old church. In overhauling the vaults about that time the mummy was taken up-stairs to be shown to the curious, and it was overlooked when the vaults were resealed. A special box was made for it, and it lay in a dark corner of the church for generations. Occasionally it was shown to special visitors, members of the royal family among them.

Now the church authorities feel that it is entitled to decent burial, and they have no place to put it. In any case, they hope to get rid of it, as it has given the old church an uncanny reputation.

THE GIANT CATFISH OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

From the neighborhood of Hannibal, Mo., come stories, based mainly on the occurrence of mysterious drownings, of a "man-eating" fish in the Mississippi. There is a fish in that river and many of its tributaries which may be responsible for the drownings, though it is not exactly "man-eating."

The fish in question is the giant cat. It is abundant along the whole length of the river, and attains a weight of hundreds of pounds. Specimens weighing 500 to 600 pounds are frequently taken on set lines from the levees at New Orleans. It has a mouth easily large enough to take in the head and shoulders of a man.

What is more, it will readily attack a man. It is numerous at Alexandria on the Red River, and its propensity to attack man is so well known and dreaded that nobody will go bathing in the river.

It has no prominently developed teeth, but its powerful jawbone is armed with spines which may easily produce the lacerations found on the legs of bodies recovered from the river.

GRAVEL FED TO CHICKENS

New Yorkers pay millions a year for the sand and gravel that is fed to chickens to make them heavier, according to Market Commissioner Edwin J. O'Malley, who announced the other day that he had taken the first steps toward stopping it by having condemned 50,000 live chickens, eight carloads.

These chickens arrived in Jersey City for the market, and the extraordinary expansion of their chests gave them a fine appearance. Inspector John F. Doyle became suspicious and investigated. At the Board of Health it was discovered that one of the chickens had a pound and a quarter of sand and gravel in its crop. Others had a pound and some a pound and a half.

Commissioner O'Malley estimated about a pound a chicken would be a fair average for the sand and gravel, or about twenty-five tons for the entire 50,000. Paying for this sand and gravel at the rate charged for chickens, it would have cost the people of New York \$15,000.

The chickens will not be permitted on the New York markets until they have reduced weight. Mr. O'Malley said it was the custom among some to starve poultry until just before it reaches New York. The fowls are then fed bran mixed with sand, gravel and red pepper. The red pepper makes them thirsty, and to the sand and gravel the chickens add large quantities of water to the overweight. Mr. O'Malley says he will see that the practice ends.

A VALUABLE DOLLAR.

The 1804 dollar is one whose value has not shrunk in these days of high prices and low powered money. In fact, the 1804 dollar is the most valuable of all. If you run across one of that date you may consider yourself somewhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000 better off, for the 1804 dollar is worth that much.

Just why the 1804 dollar is so valuable is a matter of uncertainty to numismatists. Many stories are told to explain the mystery. One is that the whole output of coinage was sent to St. Louis, then a frontier trading post, to relieve a money shortage, but that the carriers were robbed on the way and the money buried by the robbers. But the evil fate that so often overtakes those connected with buried treasure came upon the thieves. Some of them were killed, the chart locating the buried coins.

But the opinion of several other authorities is that the shortage of 1804 dollars is directly due to the fact that few were coined. Scott's Standard Catalogue, everywhere accepted by numismatists as something like a final word on such matters, inclines to the opinion that only about twenty of these dollars ever were struck off the dies. That the dies existed is certain; they were not destroyed until 1869.

The last 1804 dollar to appear came to light in Berlin in 1885. It was immediately taken up for \$1,000, but is worth much more to-day. This rare coin is larger but thinner than the dollar of to-day. It bears the bust of Liberty, the national arms and the heraldic eagle. On the face side are thirteen stars with the word "Liberty" in large letters at the top. Efforts to counterfeit it have been detected, the counterfeiters using its twin, the 1801 dollar and merely changing the figure "1" to a "4."

SINGING SANDS OF MICHIGAN EXPLAINED.

An interesting attempt is made by a writer in *Science* to explain the singing sands of Lake Michigan. These extend along its eastern shore from Gary at the southern extremity to Mackinac at the northern with comparatively few breaks or interruptions. Throughout this region the sands near the water's edge, in dry weather, emit a peculiar but definite and unmistakable sound when the foot of the pedestrian pushes through them in an abrasive way. This unusual sound is produced not only by the leather-shod foot, but is emitted also if the bare foot or hand is struck through the grains or if a stick is trailed, boy-fashion, behind.

Thoreau, in the *Journal*, said it was like the sound made by rubbing wet glass with your finger or by waxing a table. It was a squeaking sound as of one particle rubbing against another.

The sound is produced only when the sand is dry, and apparently the dryer the sand is the louder the sound produced. In wet weather or when the sand is moderately moist, the sound is not produced. As one walks away from the water's edge he may be astonished to find out that the sound-producing sand ceases rather abruptly about fifty to one hundred feet from the shore line. The upper limit of the singing sands is practically identical with the upper wave limit, that is, the boundary reached by the waves during storms.

"My hypothesis, briefly stated, is this," says a writer in *Science*. "The sand grains on the lower beach and as far as the upper limit of the storm beach are bathed periodically by the waters of the lake which contain various salts including calcium and magnesium bicarbonates. This film is of such a nature as to create considerable friction when rubbed and thus when the grains are brought into contact with various surfaces a sound is emitted. One may compare the action of the film of dried salts on the sand grains with the action of rosin on the violin bow."

"The beach sand is, of course, the same sand which later goes to form the dunes transported by the wind, but during this transportation, due to the abrasive action of grain against grain, much of the salt film is rubbed off and carried on by the wind in the same manner that clay dust is, to be deposited in quiet places as on the forest floor beyond. After deposition in blowouts or on dunes, the grains are subjected from time to time to the leaching action of rain water and this completes the removal of calcium and magnesium carbonates (in the form of bicarbonates and of the other salts) so that the original sand grain surface is restored or, to speak metaphorically, the sands lose their singing voice. Such is the hypothesis."

COOLING OF DRINKS IN INDIA

In India ice, it is known, is a great rarity. But also the Hindoos feel the want of cool drinks and they have found methods of cooling their drinks without ice, and the methods employed by them are simpler and cheaper than ours.

The principal involved in producing coolness is evaporation. You dip your hand in water and shake it. Immediately you feel the sensation of coolness. If in an overheated room you step out from a warm bathtub you soon begin to feel chilly. What is the reason? The water, to be sure, is the cause. It is, however, not the direct but the indirect cause. Not the water cools us, but the ensuing evaporation, its transformation into aqueous vapor, which in the presence of a draft of air proceeds very rapidly.

To transform water into aqueous vapor we need heat. Every child who has once watched mother in the kitchen knows this. In cooking whitish clouds of steam rise from the pot. Here the transformation proceeds visibly because the quickened development of steam causes the aqueous vapor formed on the bottom of the vessel to draw up into the air some unevaporated water in the form of minute bubbles that reflect in the light and therefore appear white.

This is in principle the same as evaporation going on naturally—e. g., transformation of liquid water into aqueous, invisible vapor. In both cases the requirement for the transformation is a supply of heat. But while in cooking the water is artificially supplied with heat and thereby the process of transformation forced, nature produces evaporation by drawing the heat required for this transformation from the nearest surroundings. This evaporation goes on until the air surrounding the layer of water or the vessel is saturated. When this saturation occurs depends upon external circumstances, chiefly upon the temperature. It has been established by experiment that forty cubic metres (about 1,413 cubic feet) of air (the contents of a middle sized room) will at 0 degree Centigrade absorb 4.9 grams of water in the form of vapor. Then the air is saturated. At the so-called normal temperature of the room—e. g., at 18 degrees Centigrade—the capacity of absorption has risen to as much as sixty grams of water. If on a hot summer day the temperature rises to 30 degrees Centigrade, then not less than 120 grams would be capable of saturating the air.

From the above it will be easy to understand the rationale of the method employed in India for the purpose of cooling their drinking water. They take an unglazed clay bottle and fill it with water. The clay allows the humidity of the contents to percolate its pores, and soon the outer walls of the bottle feel wet. Now the bottle is suspended on a thread and swings. The draft of the air thus produced causes the humidity on the surface of the bottle to evaporate rapidly and the necessary heat nature draws partly from the walls of the bottle, partly from the contents of the water. Even if the bottle is not moved the evaporation takes place, though much slower, of course, and less perceptible in its effects. Unglazed clay vessels are therefore best suited for the preservation of drinks that are to remain cool.

On the other hand, it would be foolish to attribute the cooling effect to the clay, for the cooling effect is also obtained with glass bottles wrapped in a thick flannel bag or folds of blotting paper, kept constantly wetted and placed in the sun's rays of a current of air, or both. The clay bottle does the wetting automatically, and is on this account preferable. Moreover, the swinging of the bottle can be substituted by blowing at it, since all that is required is the quickening of the evaporation by producing a draft of air. Almost ice cold water can also be obtained by exposing a porous bottle for an hour to the draft caused by an electric table ventilator.—N. Y. Herald.

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Well, dear Madam, here is a message of good cheer. It comes from a man.

Years ago when I was almost entirely bald I came across an old Cherokee Indian who induced me to try his recipe for growing hair. He told me that the principle of this formula was used by all Indians, male and female, wherever they found a need of it. You know that Indian women (and men too) have long, beautiful hair.

So I tried the recipe. The compound was an ointment for the scalp. It had a bad odor and was rather nasty. But my hair grew—and has continued to grow. Since then I have never had any trouble with my hair. At the age of 66 I now possess an abundant growth and visit the barber each month to have it cut. Once, after an accident, when I was compelled to remain in the hospital for several weeks, it grew so long that it was like a woman's flourishing hair growth.

The recipe I obtained from the old Indian savant and it has been used by many others. I have had the formula modernized by a practical chemist so that the pomade ointment now has a more pleasant odor and is more agreeable to apply to the scalp and base of the hair.

It contains no alcohol nor any of those ingredients which tend to dry the hair, scalp and roots. On the contrary, it is a fertilizing compound. The Indian principle is that it must contain elements from the three natural kingdoms. This rule is maintained in the recipe.

I want you to try this pomade on your scalp. It can be applied when resting each night, only a few moments being required. It is likely you will find a very satisfactory result, almost from the outset.

Now make no mistake; this is not a lovely scented preparation. There's nothing fancy about it. The name is Kotaike and you shall have the recipe free of cost by writing for it. Your druggist can supply the pomade according to the recipe; or you may obtain the compound from me, ready to use. Send me your name and address. The recipe will come free. If you would like a proof box of the cosmetic, enclose 10 cents, silver or stamps. My address is: John Hart Brittain, RD-101, 150 East Thirty-second St., New York, N. Y.

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Sold His for \$10.00 and Ordered Another

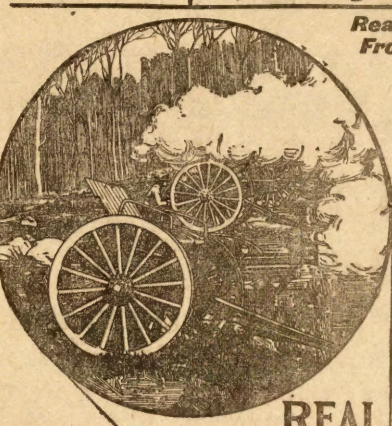
Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for \$10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Lureth, Mandan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for \$25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for \$25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Breaky, Jeanesville, Pa. Hot 54.

Better Than a \$12.00 Machine

I am glad about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has never broken yet. I would have seen a \$12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Liebert, care of Revolution Hotel, Greensboro, N. C.



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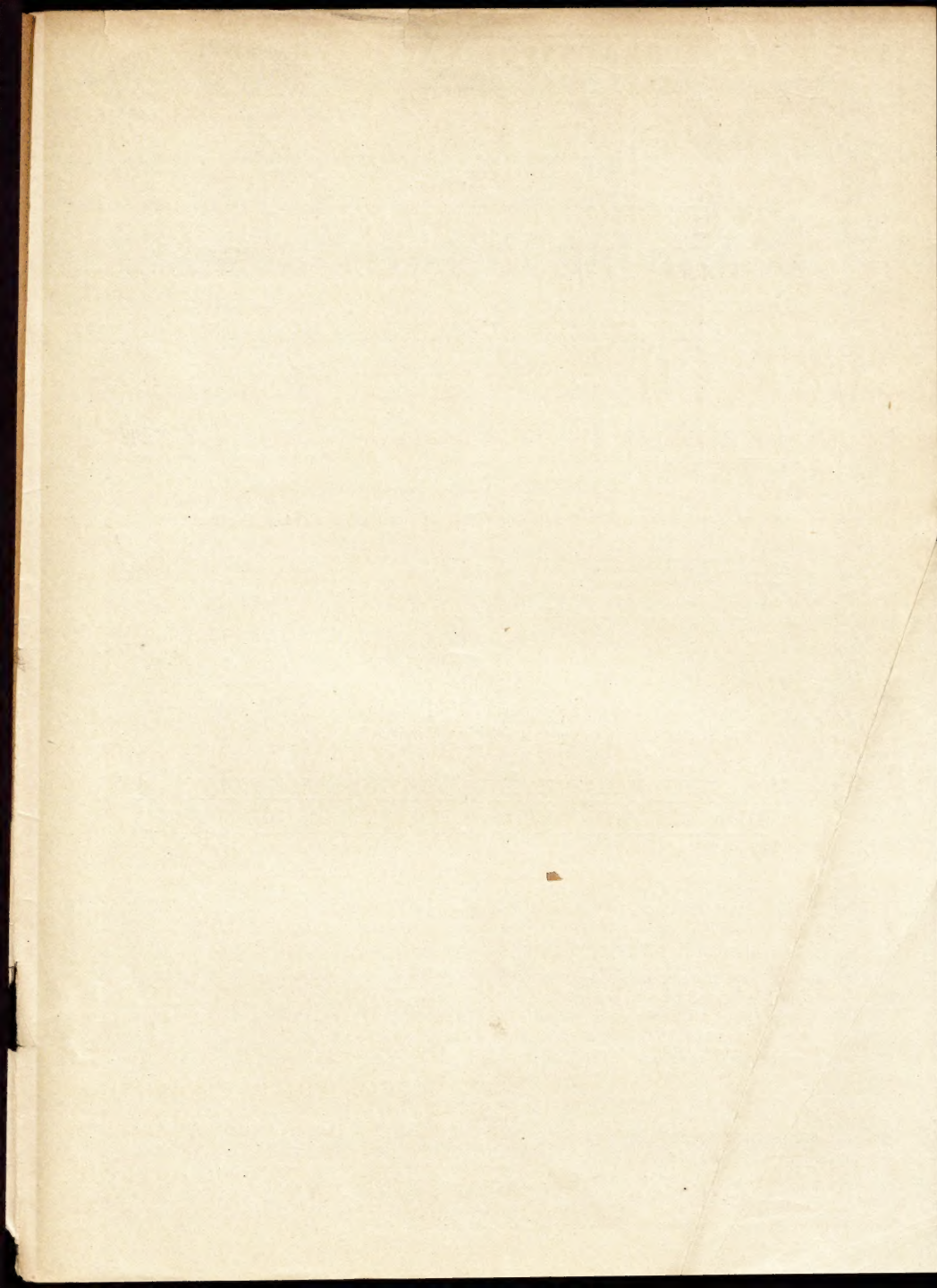
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